

Studies in the Early Middle Ages

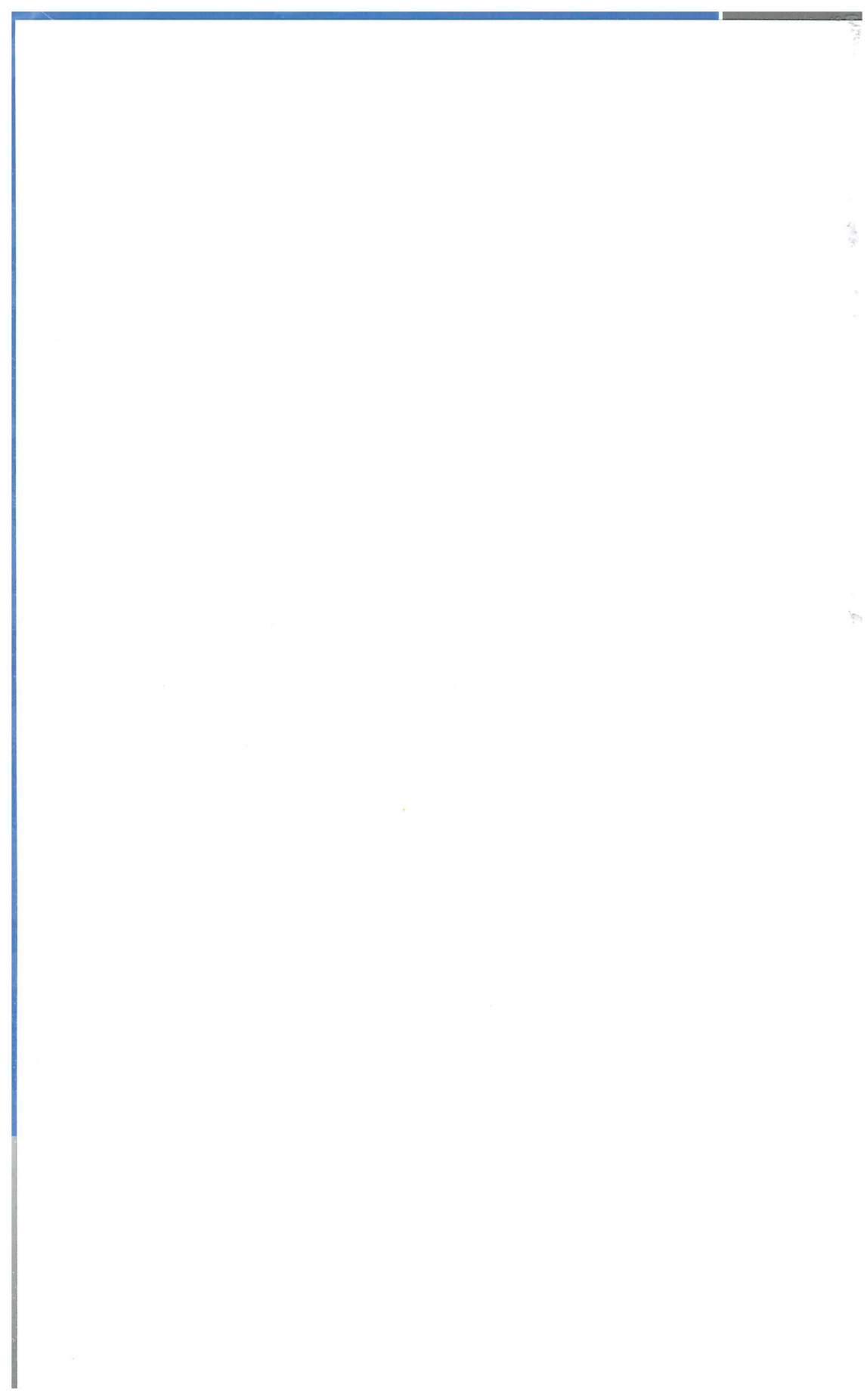
On Barbarian Identity

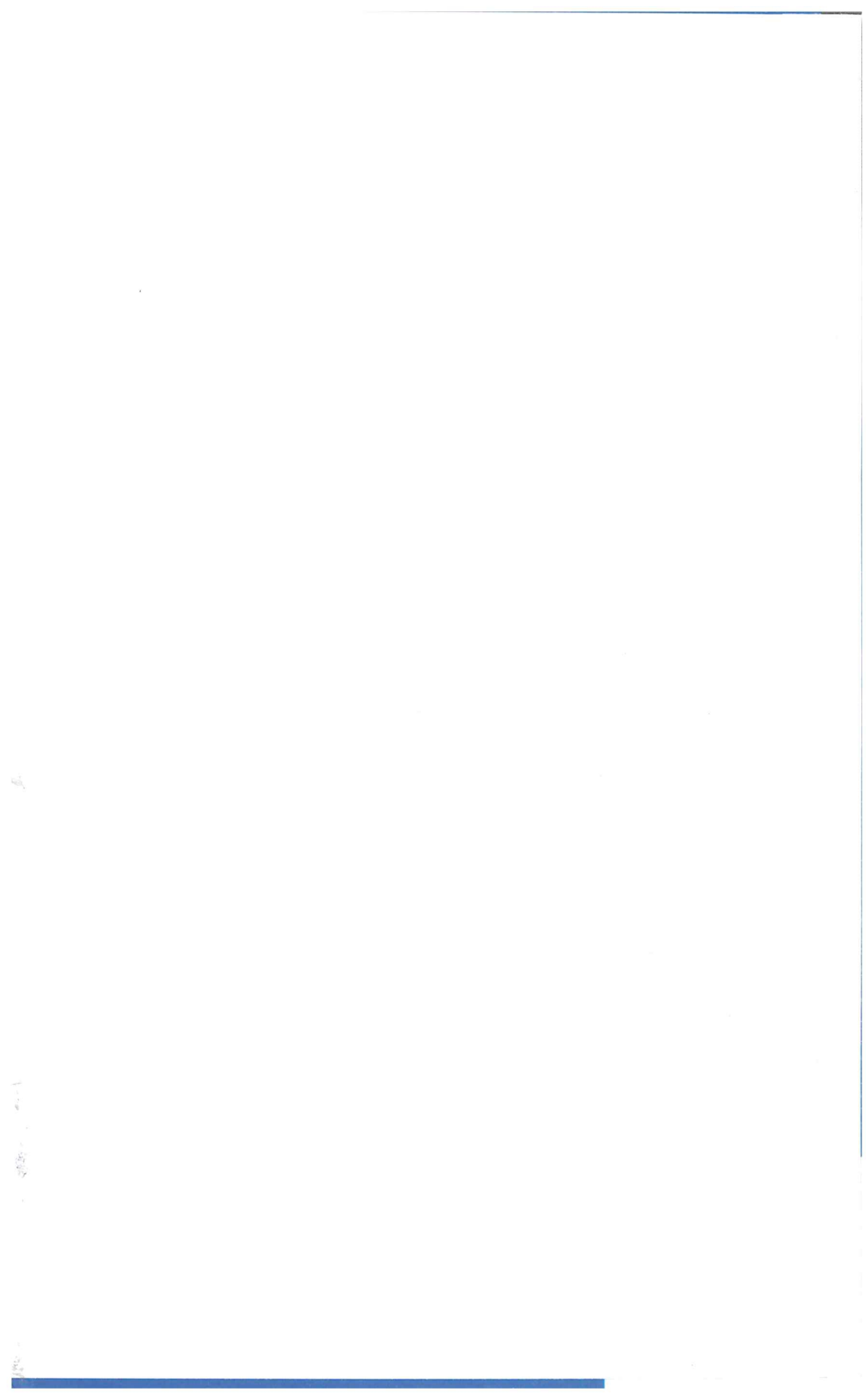
Critical Approaches to Ethnicity
in the Early Middle Ages



Edited by
Andrew Gillett

BREPOLS







Studies in the Early Middle Ages

This series focuses on Western Europe in the Early Middle Ages and covers work in the areas of history, language & literature, archaeology, art history and religious studies. It brings together current scholarship on early medieval Britain with scholarship on western continental Europe and Viking Scandinavia, more traditionally studied separately or in terms of the interaction of discrete cultures and areas. As well as advocating new approaches across geographical and political divisions, this series spans the conventional distinctions between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages on the one hand, and the Early Middle Ages and the twelfth century on the other.

On Barbarian Identity

Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages

Ethnicity has been central to medieval studies since the Goths, Franks, Alamanni and other barbarian settlers of the former Roman empire were first seen as part of Germanic antiquity. Today, two paradigms dominate interpretation of barbarian Europe. In history, theories of how tribes formed ('ethnogenesis') assert the continuity of Germanic identities from prehistory through the Middle Ages, and see cultural rather than biological factors as the means of preserving these identities. In archaeology, the 'culture history' approach has long claimed to be able to trace movements of peoples not attested in the historical record, by identifying ethnically-specific material goods. The papers in this volume challenge the concepts and methodologies of these two models. The authors explore new ways to understand barbarians in the early Middle Ages, and to analyse the images of the period constructed by modern scholarship. Two responses to the papers, one by a leading exponent of the 'ethnogenesis' approach, the other by a leading critic, continue this important debate.

Series logo is taken from a cross, Otley church, West Yorkshire

*Cover image: from a North African mosaic showing a noble flaunting his villa and private hunting estate and raising his hand in triumph. He sports hair and extravagantly fine clothing in barbarian style. Ethnic identity or radical chic?
From British Museum 1967, 0405.18, reproduced by permission.*

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THE UNIVERSITY of York

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Critical Approaches to Ethnicity
in the Early Middle Ages

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Preface

When I was invited to suggest a topic of current debate in early medieval studies as the basis of a volume in the new series *Studies in the Early Middle Ages*, it seemed a useful opportunity to gather together doubting views on 'ethnogenesis'. In part through an impressive number of sessions at international medievalist conferences during the 1990s, 'ethnogenesis' theory had become a major feature on the academic landscape, attracting supporters in Europe and North America. Some, however, failed to find value in its approach, while others were critical of the construct's methods and claims to novelty. Yet no published critique of the set of ideas under the 'ethnogenesis' label appeared before two articles, by Charles Bowlus and by Walter Goffart, written independently and published coincidentally in 1995; as far as I am aware, no further major critiques have appeared since. The two papers focussed on aspects of the approach associated with the University of Vienna, and left room for more to be said (including the further contributions to the debate made by both authors in this volume).

The intent of the present volume is to further this debate and to bring it to the attention of medievalists and others who do not specialize in the period of the post-imperial barbarian kingdoms. It is particularly, but not solely, aimed at an English-language audience. One important characteristic of work along 'ethnogenesis' lines since the late 1980s has been the publication in English of major works, most notably the translation of Herwig Wolfram's *History of the Goths*, which draw upon older research in German. English-language readers have been exposed to a fully formed set of ideas, without necessarily having access to the supporting arguments presented in earlier works, or an awareness of the historiographic context from which recent works stem. An English-language medievalist audience is also likely to be familiar with another continental paradigm, the 'culture history' approach to archaeological evidence — that is, the labelling of early medieval artefacts with tribal names such as 'Gothic' or 'Thuringian', and the deployment of this archaeological evidence for historical arguments. But, as with 'ethnogenesis' theory, the methodological assumptions underlying these apparent statements of fact and the background of this construct are much less likely to be known. This volume brings together critiques of these two dominant paradigms for current work in the early Middle Ages.

It is a pleasure to record my thanks to those who were involved in the production of this volume. The contributors have been exceptionally cooperative and diligent, and I am grateful for the high standard of their papers. Considerable consultation between various contributors took place during the writing of these papers; to avoid repetition, this is not generally recorded in the acknowledgments of each paper but I am happy to recall it here. I would like to acknowledge the generous cooperation and grace with which both Herwig Wolfram and Walter Pohl responded to the proposal for this volume, resulting *inter alia* in Professor Pohl's contribution below. Most of the papers which appear in Sections I and II of this volume were originally delivered at a series of sponsored sessions at the International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, in 2000; I am grateful to the University of York and to Brepols for sponsoring the sessions, to the extremely helpful conference organizers, and to the attendees of the sessions. In particular, Andreas Schwarcz of the University of Vienna contributed valuably to the discussion and agreed to prepare a Response for this volume; it was a great disappointment that this was precluded by pressures of work. Martin Eggers of the University of Munich also offered a paper for this volume, but circumstances conspired against this; I am grateful for his support and look forward to seeing his paper elsewhere. The organization of the sessions at Kalamazoo and the editing of this volume were supported in part by an Australian Research Council Post-doctoral Fellowship held at Macquarie University, and I am glad to record the genial and supportive atmosphere of the Department of Ancient History and the Ancient History Documentary Research Centre there. Two Macquarie University Research Grants enabled Walter Goffart to spend time as a Research Fellow at Macquarie University and me to attend Kalamazoo; I am most grateful for this institutional support. Elizabeth Tyler of the University of York and Simon Forde of Brepols have been friendly and helpful editors, and I wish to acknowledge the valuable advice of the anonymous reader for the volume. Susan Reynolds offered encouragement and useful suggestions. I am much indebted to the support and good advice of Antonina Harbus.

Abbreviations

- Acta synodi Romae* aa. 499, 501
Acta synhodorum habitarum Romae, ed. by T. Mommsen, in Cass., *Var.*, pp. 393–455
- AE* *L'Année épigraphique*
- Agnellus, *Liber pont.* Agnellus, *Liber pontificalis ecclesiae Ravennatis*, ed. by O. Holder-Egger, in MGH Ss rer Lang, pp. 265–391
- AHR* *American Historical Review*
- AKS Akateeminen Karjala-Seura [Academic Society for Karelia]
- Amm. Marc. Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, ed. by Wolfgang Seyfarth, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1978)
- Amory, *People and Identity*
 Patrick Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489–554* (Cambridge, 1997)
- ArchRoz* *Archeologické Rozhledy*
- Avitus, *Ep(p)*. Avitus, *Contra Arrianos*, frag. XXX (= *Ep.* I), *Contra Euty-chianam haeresim libri II* (= *Epp.* II–VI), *Epistularum ad diversos libri tres* (*Epp.* VII–XCVIII), in Avitus, *Opera*, ed. by Rudolf Peiper, MGH AA VI.2 (Berlin, 1882)
- BAR British Archaeological Reports
- Bede, *HE* Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. by Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969)
- Bognetti, *Eta Longobarda*, III
 Gian Piero Bognetti, *Eta Longobardo*, vol. III (Milan, 1966–68)

Bowlus, 'Ethnogenesis Models'

Charles R. Bowlus, 'Ethnogenesis Models and the Age of Migrations: A Critique', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 26 (1995), 147–64

Brev. Alarici: praesc., auct., subsc.

Breviarium Alaricianum: praescriptio, auctoritas, subscriptio, in *Theodosiani libri XVI*, ed. by T. Mommsen and P. Krüger, 2nd edn, vol. I (Berlin, 1905; repr. Dublin, 1971), pp. xxxi–xxxvii

CAnth

Current Anthropology

Capit.

Capitularia regum Francorum, ed. by Alfred Boretius, MGH Legum sectio II.1 (Hannover, 1883)

Cass., Var.

Cassiodorus, *Variae*, ed. by T. Mommsen, MGH AA XII (Berlin, 1894)

CCSL

Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina

CDL III, IV

Codice diplomatico Longobardo, ed. by Carlrichard Brühl, III.1, IV.1, *Fonti per la storia d'Italia*, 64, 65 (Rome, 1973, 1981)

Chapman and Hamerow (eds), *Migrations and Invasions*

Migrations and Invasions in Archaeological Explanation, ed. by John Chapman and Helena Hamerow, BAR International Series, 664 (Oxford, 1997)

ChLA

Chartae Latinae antiquiores: Facsimile-Edition of the Latin Charters Prior to the Ninth Century, ed. by Hartmut Atsma and others, vols XIII–XIX (Zurich, 1981–87)

Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua

The Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite, trans. by Frank R. Trombley and John W. Watt, TTH, 32 (Liverpool, 2000)

CIL

Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum, ed. by T. Mommsen and others (Berlin, 1862–)

Claudian

Claudian, *Carmina*, ed. by John Barrie Hall (Leipzig, 1985)

IV cons. Hon.

De quarto consulatu Honorii augusti

VI cons. Hon.

De sexto consulatu Honorii augusti

Eutr.

In Eutropium

Get.

De bello Getico

Ruf.

In Rufinum

Stil.

De consulatu Stilichonis

- Coen, 'Deux actes' M. Coen, 'Deux actes de Sigebert III en faveur de S. Cunibert', *Acta Bollandiana*, 56 (1938), 370–82
- Coll. Avell.* *Epistulae imperatorem pontificum aliorum (Collectio Avel-lana)*, ed. by Otto Guenther, CSEL, 35 (Vienna, 1895)
- Columba, *Ep.* Columba, *Epistolae*, ed. by W. Gundlach, in MGH Ep III, pp. 154–90
- Conc. Carthag. a.525* *Concilium Carthaginense a.525*, in *Concilium Africae a.345–a.525*, ed. by C. Munier, CCSL, 259 (Turnhout, 1974)
- Conc. Gall. a.314–506* *Concilia Galliae a.314–a.506*, ed. by C. Munier, CCSL, 148 (Turnhout, 1963)
- Conc. Gall. a.511–695* *Concilia Galliae a.511–a.695*, ed. by C. de Clercq, CCSL, 148a (Turnhout, 1963)
- Constit. extrav.* *Constitutiones extravagantes*, in *Leges Burg.*, pp. 117–22
- CSEL Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
- CSSH *Comparative Studies in Society and History*
- CTh* *Theodosiani libri XVI*, ed. by T. Mommsen and P. Meyer, 4th edn, 2 vols (Berlin, 1970)
- Curta, *Making of the Slavs* Florin Curta, *The Making of the Slavs: History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region, ca. 500–700* (Cambridge, 2001)
- Dalton, *Cat. Early Chr. Ant.* O. M. Dalton, *Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities and Objects from the Christian East* [British Museum] (London, 1901)
- Daremberg C. Daremberg and E. Saglio, *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines d'après les textes et les monuments*, vol. II (Paris, 1877–1919; repr. Graz, 1962–63, 1969)
- Delbrueck Richard Delbrueck, 'Spätantike Germanenbildnisse', *Bonner Jahrbücher des Rheinischen Landesmuseum*, 149 (1949), 66–81 and tables 1–2
- Desiderius, *Ep.* Desiderius, *Epistolae*, ed. by W. Arndt, in MGH Ep III, pp. 191–214
- Dessau, *ILS* Hermann Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae selectae*, 3 vols in 5 (Berlin, 1892–1916)

Die Franken: Wegbereiter Europas

Die Franken: Wegbereiter Europas, Städtisches Reiss-Museum, Mannheim, 2 vols (Mainz, 1996)

Diehl, *ILCV*

Ernest Diehl, *Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae veteres*, 4 vols (Dublin/Zurich, 1924–67)

Ep. aevi Merow.

Epistolae aevi Merovingici collectae, ed. by W. Gundlach, in MGH Ep III, pp. 434–68

Ep. Arel.

Epistolae Arelatenses genuinae, ed. by W. Gundlach, in MGH Ep III, pp. 1–83

Ep. Austr.

Epistolae Austrasicae, ed. by W. Gundlach, in MGH Ep III, pp. 110–53

Ep. Lang.

Epistolae Langobardicae, ed. by W. Gundlach, in MGH Ep III, pp. 691–715

Ep. Theoderici

Epistulae Theodericianae variae, ed. by T. Mommsen, in Cass., *Var.*, pp. 387–92

Ep. Wis.

Epistolae Wisigoticae, ed. by W. Gundlach, in MGH Ep III, pp. 658–90

Eunapius

Eunapius in *Frag. Class. Hist.*, pp. 1–150

Fiebiger

Otto Fiebiger and Ludwig Schmidt, *Inscriptensammlung der Geschichte der Ostgermanen*, 3 vols (Vienna, 1917–44)

Fifth-Century Gaul

Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?, ed. by J. F. Drinkwater and Hugh Elton (Cambridge, 1992)

FIR

Fontes iuris Romani antejustiniani, ed. by Salvator Riccobono and others, 2nd edn, 3 vols (Florence, 1969)

Form. Visigoth.

Formulae Visigothicae, in MGH Form, pp. 572–98

Frag. Class. Hist.

The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus, ed. and trans. by R. C. Blockley, vol. II, ARCA Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs, 10 (Liverpool, 1983), with correlation of fragment numbers to Müller's edition at pp. 485–94

Franken und Alemannen

Die Franken und die Alemannen bis zur 'Schlacht bei Zülpich' (496/97), ed. by Dieter Geuenich, RGA Ergänzungsbände, 19 (Berlin, 1998)

- Fredegar, *Chron.* Fredegar, *Chronica*, ed. by Bruno Krusch, MGH Ss rer Merov II (Hannover, 1888)
- Geary, 'Barbarians and Ethnicity'
Patrick J. Geary, 'Barbarians and Ethnicity', in *Late Antiquity: A Guide*, pp. 107–29
- Geary, *Before France and Germany*
Patrick J. Geary, *Before France and Germany: The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World* (Oxford, 1988)
- Geary, 'Ethnic Identity as a Situational Construct'
Patrick J. Geary, 'Ethnic Identity as a Situational Construct in the Early Middle Ages', *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien*, 113 (1983), 15–26
- Goffart, 'Germanic Antiquity Today'
Walter Goffart, 'Two Notes on Germanic Antiquity Today', *Traditio*, 50 (1995), 9–30
- Goffart, *Narrators of Barbarian History*
Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (AD 550–800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton, 1988)
- Greg. Reg. Gregory I, *Registrum epistolarum*, ed. by P. Ewald and L. M. Hartmann, 2 vols, MGH Epistolae I and II (Berlin, 1891, 1899)
- Gregory of Tours, *Hist.* Gregory of Tours, *Libri historiarum X*, ed. by Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison, 2nd edn, MGH Ss rer Merov I.1 (Hannover, 1951)
- Grierson Philip Grierson and Mark Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage*, vol. I (Cambridge, 1986)
- Heather, *Goths* Peter Heather, *The Goths* (Oxford, 1996)
- Heather, *Goths and Romans*
Peter Heather, *Goths and Romans, 332–489* (Oxford, 1991)
- Hydatius, *Chron.* Hydatius Lemicus, *Continuatio chronicorum Hieronymianorum*, ed. by T. Mommsen, in MGH AA XI (Berlin, 1894), pp. 1–36; also Hydatius, *The Chronicle of Hydatius and the Consularia Constantinopolitana: Two Contemporary Accounts of the Final Years of the Roman Empire*, ed. and trans. by R. W. Burgess (Oxford, 1993) [references give

- Mommsen's numbering first, followed by Burgess's in square brackets]
- IZ* *Istoricheskii Zhurnal*
- Jones, *Archaeology of Ethnicity* Siân Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity: Constructing Identities in the Past and Present* (London, 1997)
- Jones, *LRE* A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284–602: A Social, Economic, and Administrative Survey*, 3 vols (Oxford, 1964)
- Jordanes, *Getica* Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum*, in Jordanes, *Romana et Getica*, ed. by T. Mommsen, MGH AA v.1 (Berlin, 1882)
- Just., *Nov. App.* Justinian, *Novellae: Appendix constitutionum dispersarum in Corpus iuris civilis*, ed. by R. Schoell and G. Kroll, vol. III, 8th edn (Berlin, 1963), pp. 796–803
- Kingdoms of the Empire* *Kingdoms of the Empire: The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Walter Pohl, TRW, 1 (Leiden, 1997)
- KSIA* *Kratkie Soobshcheniia Instituta Arkheologii Akademii Nauk SSSR*
- Late Antiquity: A Guide* *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World*, ed. by G. W. Bowersock, Peter Brown, and Oleg Grabar (Cambridge, MA, 1999)
- Lauer and Samaran P. Lauer and C. Samaran, *Les diplômes originaux des Mérovingiens* (Paris, 1908)
- LCL Loeb Classical Library
- Leges Burg.* *Leges Burgundionum*, ed. by L. R. de Salis, MGH Legum Sectio I, 2.1 (Hannover, 1892)
- Leges Lang.* *Le leggi dei Longobardi: storia, memoriae e diritto di un popolo germanico*, ed. by Claudio Azzara and Stefano Gasparri, Le fonti, 1 (Milan, 1992)
- Lex Vis.* *Liber iudiciorum sive Lex Visigothorum*, in *Leges Visigothorum*, ed. by K. Zeumer, MGH Legum sectio I, 1 (Hannover, 1902), pp. 33–456
- Liber const.* *Liber constitutionum sive Lex Gundobada*, in *Leges Burg.*, pp. 29–116

<i>Liber pont.</i>	<i>Le Liber Pontificalis</i> , ed. by L. Duchesne and C. Vogel, 3 vols (Paris, 1886–1957; repr. 1981)
<i>Longobardi</i>	<i>I Longobardi</i> , ed. by Gian Carlo Menis (Milan, 1992)
Marc., <i>Form.</i>	Marculf, <i>Formulae</i> , in MGH Form, pp. 32–112
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae historica
MGH AA	MGH Auctores antiquissimi
MGH Dipl	<i>Diplomata imperii</i> , ed. by G. H. Pertz, vol. I, MGH Diplomata (Hannover, 1872)
MGH Ep III	<i>Epistolae Merovingici et Karolini aevi</i> , ed. by E. Dümmler, W. Gundlach, and others, MGH Epistolae III (Berlin 1892)
MGH Form	<i>Formulae Merovingici et Karolini aevi</i> , ed. by K. Zeumer, MGH Legum sectio V (Hannover, 1886)
MGH Ss rer Lang	MGH Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum saec. VI–IX, ed. by G. Waitz, L. Bethmann, and O. Holder-Egger (Hannover, 1878)
MGH Ss rer Merov	MGH Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum
MIÖG	<i>Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung</i>
Mitchell and Greatrex (eds), <i>Ethnicity and Culture</i>	<i>Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity</i> , ed. by Stephen Mitchell and Geoffrey Greatrex (London, 2000)
Murator	Ludovico Muratori, <i>Antiquitates Italicae medii aevi</i> , 6 vols (Milan, 1738–42; repr. Bologne, 1965), II
NBA	National Board of Antiquities (in Finland)
<i>Necropole St-Laurent</i>	Pierre Wuilleumier, Amable Audin, and André Leroi-Gourhan, <i>L'Église et la nécropole Saint-Laurent dans le quartier Lyonnais de Choulans</i> , Mémoires et documents, 4 (Audin, 1949)
<i>Not. dig.</i>	<i>Notitia dignitatum</i> , ed. by Otto Seeck (1876; repr. Frankfurt am Main, 1962)
<i>OCD</i>	<i>The Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> , 1st edn, ed. by M. Cary and others (Oxford, 1949); 2nd edn, ed. by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (Oxford, 1970); 3rd edn, ed. by Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (Oxford, 1996)

- Olympiodorus Olympiodorus of Thebes in *Frag. Class. Hist.*, pp. 151–220
- Origo gentis Lang.* *Origo gentis Langobardorum*, ed. by L. Bethmann and G. Waitz, in MGH Ss rer Lang, pp. 1–6
- Orosius, *Hist.* Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII*, ed. by C. Zangemeister, CSEL, 5 (Vienna, 1882; repr. Hildesheim, 1967)
- Pan. Lat.* *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors: The Panegyrici Latini*, trans. by C. E. V. Nixon and Barbara Saylor Rogers with the Latin text of R. A. B. Mynors (Berkeley, 1994)
- Paul the Deacon, *Hist. Lang.* Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum*, ed. by Ludwig Bethmann and Georg Waitz, in MGH Ss rer Lang, pp. 12–187
- PG *Patrologia cursus completus. Series graeca*, ed. by J.-P. Migne, 162 vols (Paris, 1857–87)
- PL *Patrologia cursus completus. Series latina*, ed. by J.-P. Migne, 221 vols (Paris, 1844–64)
- PLRE *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, ed. by A. H. M. Jones, John Martindale, and others, 3 vols (Cambridge, 1971–92)
- Pohl, *Die Awaren* Walter Pohl, *Die Awaren: Ein Steppenvolk in Mitteleuropa 567–822 n. Chr.* (Munich, 1988)
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Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde, 2nd edn unless specified otherwise (Berlin, 1973–)

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Harold Matingly, C. H. V. Sutherland, and R. A. G. Carson, *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. IX: *Valentinian I–Theodosius I* (London, 1933)

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P. E. Schramm, *Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik*, vol. I (Stuttgart, 1954)

Shennan (ed.), *Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity*

Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity, ed. by Stephen Shennan, One World Archaeology, 10 (London, 1989)

Sid. Ap.

Sidonius Apollinaris, *Poèmes et lettres*, ed. and trans. by A. Løyen, 3 vols (Paris, 1970)

- SKST Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran Toimituksia [Proceedings of the Finnish Literature Society]
- SLA *Slavia Antiqua*
- SovS *Sovetskoe Slavianovedenie* (after 1991: *Slavianovedenie*)
- Stammesbildung und Verfassung*
see Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*
- StHistArch Studies in Historical Archaeoethnography, series ed. by Giorgio Ausenda (Woodbridge, 1995–)
- Strategies of Distinction* *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, ed. by Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz, TRW, 2 (Leiden, 1998)
- Tabl. Albert.* *Tablettes Albertini: actes privés de l'époque Vandale (fin du V^e siècle)*, ed. by C. Courtois and others (Paris, 1952)
- Themistius Themistius, *Orationes quae supersunt*, ed. by H. Schenkl, G. Downey, and A. F. Norman, 3 vols (Leipzig, 1965–74)
- Tjäder Jan-Olaf Tjäder, *Die nichtliterarischen Papyri Italiens aus der Zeit 445–700*, 3 vols, Acta Instituti Romani Regni Sueciae, 19.1–3 (Lund, 1955–82)
- TTH Translated Texts for Historians (Liverpool)
- TRW The Transformation of the Roman World, series ed. by Ian Wood (Leiden, 1997–)
- Typen der Ethnogenese* *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern*, 2 vols, vol. I ed. by Herwig Wolfram and Walter Pohl, vol. II ed. by Herwig Friesinger and Falko Daim, Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Phil.-Hist. Klasse, 201, 204 (Vienna, 1990)
- VDI *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii*
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- Vict. Vit. Victor of Vita, *Historia persecutionis Africanae provinciae sub Geiserico et Hunerico regibus Wandalorum*, ed. by C. Halm, MGH AA III.1 (Berlin, 1879)
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J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Long-Haired Kings* (London, 1962)
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- Wolfram, *Intitulatio* Herwig Wolfram, *Intitulatio*, vol. I: *Lateinische Königs- und Fürstentitel bis zum Ende des 8. Jahrhunderts*, *MIÖG* Ergänzungsband, 21 (Graz, 1967)
- Wolfram, *Die Goten*, 3rd edn
Herwig Wolfram, *Die Goten von der Anfängen bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts: Entwurf einer historischen Ethnographie*, 3rd edn (Munich, 1990)
- Wolfram, *History of the Goths*
Herwig Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, trans. by Thomas J. Dunlap (Berkeley, 1988)
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Herwig Wolfram, 'Origo et religio: Ethnic Traditions and Literature in Early Medieval Texts', *Early Medieval Europe*, 3 (1994), 19–38
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Herwig Wolfram, 'Typen der Ethnogenese: Ein Versuch', in *Franken und Alemannen*, pp. 608–27
- Wood, 'Burgundians'
Ian Wood, 'Ethnicity and the Ethnogenesis of the Burgundians', in *Typen der Ethnogenese*, I, 53–69
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Warwick Wroth, *Western and Provincial Byzantine Coins of the Vandals, Ostrogoths, Lombards, and the Empires of Thessalonica, Nicaea and Trebizond in the British Museum* (London, 1911; repr. Chicago, 1998)

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Erich Zöllner, *Geschichte der Franken bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1970)

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Introduction: Ethnicity, History, and Methodology

ANDREW GILLET

To the Vandals, the Goths seemed like τροῦλοι, trolls, as the Scandinavians still call the demons and monsters of the other world.

(Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, pp. 26–27 and 389 nn. 71–72)

The Vandals call the Goths *Trulli* because, when the Goths were oppressed by hunger, they bought grain from the Vandals at one *solidus* per *trulla* [spoon]. A *trulla* is less than one-third of a *sextarius*.

(Olympiodorus of Thebes, frag. 29.1,
trans. by Blockley in *Frag. Class. Hist.* with minor modifications)

This minor example of a late antique text and its deployment by a modern author flags a number of problems in current writings on barbarian identities. The primary source, Olympiodorus of Thebes, an early-fifth-century Byzantine historian with a well-informed interest in recent western history, describes the famine faced by a group of Goths in 414 when they were blockaded by imperial forces after crossing the Pyrenees into Spain. The Vandals, secure in the Spanish seats they had occupied three years earlier, exploited the Goths' suffering by selling them grain at a price several hundred times above the usual rate, demanding a gold *solidus* for each spoonful (Latin *trulla* — whence modern English 'trowel' — transliterated into Greek by Olympiodorus). To add insult to injury, they mocked their victims as *trulli*, 'spoonies' or 'dippers', making the *trulla* the symbol of their humiliation. None of this context is adduced in the modern interpretation of the term τροῦλοι quoted above. The modern discussion forms part of a survey of the names of Gothic peoples, distinguishing between barbarian, classical, and Christian nomenclature, with the intention of showing how the barbarian names preserve fossilized evidence of the movements and

status of Gothic groups, and of how they were perceived by both themselves and other barbarians. In the passage cited, *trulla* is given a pan-Germanic, rather than Latin, etymology and is used as evidence of how one Germanic group named and conceived of another in terms native to Germanic northern Europe ('troll' is first attested in Icelandic literature of the thirteenth century). The Vandals are portrayed as 'threatened neighbour[s]' of the Goths, fearing rather than mocking them; the explanation of the term *trulli* by Olympiodorus is dismissed as 'folk etymology'.¹

The distance between text and its modern deployment is vast, not least because of the reversal of the positions of the Vandals and the Goths as superior and inferior parties in this exchange. Several striking methodological and historiographic commitments motivate this transformation of trowels into trolls. The usual conventions of textual and historical analysis are bypassed in order to privilege Germanic philology, here applied to a classicising Greek text; the barbarians of Late Antiquity are linked with Scandinavian mythology of almost a millennium later; and the whole interpretation is directly indebted to Germanist scholarship of a century ago.² On a larger scale, the same

¹ Names: Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, pp. 19–35; neighbours: *ibid.*, p. 26; 'folk etymology': *ibid.*, pp. 28 and 389 n. 81, and more clearly in the later, third German edition (*Die Goten*, 3rd edn, p. 37) which restates Much's interpretation against Blockley's commentary (see following note).

² For background and commentary on the passage from Olympiodorus: *Frag. Class. Hist.*, p. 218 n. 62; for the historical context: Orosius, *Hist.*, VII 43.1; Hydatius, *Chron.*, 60 [52]; on factual reportage and Latin technical terminology in Olympiodorus: E. A. Thompson, 'Olympiodorus of Thebes', *Classical Quarterly*, 38 (1944), 43–52 (p. 48); J. F. Matthews, 'Olympiodorus of Thebes and the History of the West (A.D. 407–425)', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 60 (1970), 79–97 (pp. 85–86).

Scholarly debt: the interpretation of the Goths in this passage as trolls was first proposed in 1901 by Richard Lowe, 'Zwei wandalische Wörter', *Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*, 27 (1901), 107–08, and developed by Rudolph Much, 'Völkernamen', in *RGA*, 1st edn, IV (1919), pp. 425–33 (p. 431) (dismissing Olympiodorus's explanation of the name as 'folk etymology'), and Max Vasmer, 'Ein vandalischer Name der Goten', *Studia Neophilologica*, 15 (1942/1943), 132–34; cf. Norbert Wagner, *Getica: Untersuchungen zum Leben des Jordanes und zur frühen Geschichte der Goten* (Berlin, 1967), pp. 82–83. Wolfram (as for previous note) cites Much and Wagner. For trolls in Icelandic literature: Richard Cleasby and Gudbrand Vigfusson, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1957), s.v., p. 641; for etymology: Terence H. Wilbur, 'Troll: An Etymological Note', *Scandinavian Studies*, 30 (1958), 137–39. Mommsen, in a note to his 1882 edition of Jordanes, *Getica*, p. viii n. 12, cites the passage of Olympiodorus but shows no awareness of a Germanic mythic context.

Wolfram (*Die Goten*, 3rd edn, p. 37) raises several objections to Blockley's commentary, but none are substantial: (a) Wolfram finds the rate of inflation for the price of grain (perhaps five hundred times usual prices) incredible, and indeed it is excessive even for famine prices (Jones, *LRE*, pp. 445–46, 844–45 with *Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua*, p. li). But Olympiodorus defines a

misdirections which confound interpretation of this small passage from Olympiodorus shape much of the current discussion of barbarian ethnicity and 'ethnogenesis'.

The papers in this volume address two modern approaches to the question of ethnic identity in the proto-historical and early medieval periods, one which is philological/historical, the other archaeological. A relatively recent development in the field of early medieval studies in general and *germanische Altertumskunde* (the study of Germanic antiquity) in particular is the rise to historical orthodoxy of the theory here labelled 'Traditionskern ethnogenesis theory'. This theory of the origins of ethnic groups (ethnogenesis) centres on the concept of a binding core of tradition (*Traditionskern*), either embodied in an aristocratic elite which 'bears' the group's identity-giving traditions, or transmitted by less tangible 'ethnic discourses'. The theory is essentially philological (in the original sense of the word) in approach but framed with reference to contemporary thought in the social sciences. *Traditionskern* theory posits the replication of group identity through the subscription by members to a mythic narrative of the group's past (the 'core of tradition'), focused on the divine descent of its rulers. Originating in the 1961 publication *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* by the historian Reinhard Wenskus, the theory has been most vigorously propounded by scholars of the

trulla for his Greek-speaking audience in order to underscore the enormity of the figures. The Vandals' extortion, as Blockley rightly points out, was a function of the Goths' desperate situation as refugees, combined with the vast loot they still bore from the sack of Rome. (b) Wolfram dismisses the Latin meaning for the Goths' nickname, 'spoons' or 'spoonies', as 'salzlos', but there are contemporary *comparanda* for similarly domestic images serving as depreciatory insults, e.g. the nick-name of the mercenary soldiers known as *buccellarii* (from 'dry bread'): Olympiodorus, frag. 7.4 and 12 [7, 11] and the scholiast on Basil, cited by C. R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: A Social and Economic Study* (Baltimore, 1994), p. 272. Such belittling imagery, like sexual terminology, is a standard form of insult; cf. the list of satirical names of the Roman *plebs* in Amm. Marc. XXXVIII 4.28 (including *Trulla*); English 'spoon' and German 'Löffel' are both archaic insults meaning 'simpleton': *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1989), xvi, 310 §7; Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, ed. by Moriz Heyne, vol. VI (Leipzig, 1885), col. 1120 (I am indebted to Alexander C. Murray, Tom Hillard, and Doug Kelly for references and advice). (c) Wolfram also doubts that the Vandals would use a Latin word, but a term of trade (here, a unit of measure) is exactly the sort of vocabulary likely to cross linguistic barriers. (d) Wolfram believes that Olympiodorus's presentation of *trulla* as a depreciatory insult has no 'Sinn und Bedeutung', but in the historical context of the Goths' desperate situation, callous mockery makes grim sense, whereas the supernatural term 'troll' is irrelevant, either in its late medieval sense of feared monster or giant, or in the apparent early Germanic root sense of 'trickster' (Wilbur, 'Troll', p. 139). There is no need for an alternative etymology for Olympiodorus's Latinate term.

University of Vienna, particularly Herwig Wolfram and Walter Pohl, the latter of whom is a Respondent in this volume.³

The second approach discussed in the papers below is one which has been dominant in its field of study throughout most of the twentieth century: the 'culture history' approach in archaeology.⁴ This theory maintains that coherent areas of homogeneous material goods coincide with historically attested peoples. The movements and even origins ('ethnogenesis') of historical peoples may be traced by charting the expansions and contractions of the material cultures with which they are equated; archaeological sources may therefore compensate for the lack of written records. The construct was developed by Gustav Kossinna and others in the context of the late-nineteenth/early-twentieth-century search for Germanic cultural continuity and was quickly adopted by Slavic, Celtic, and other studies.⁵ In the past, the 'culture history' approach was often linked to modern political ideologies. It continues to underpin much work in archaeology and museology.

Ethnicity, the topic of much contemporary research, has been integral to the study of early medieval Europe since the beginnings of modern scholarship. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, erudite authors in the Holy Roman Empire and the Scandinavian countries sought to create an alternative antiquity to the Roman past which

³ For an outline of the historiography: Falko Daim, 'Archaeology, Ethnicity and the Structures of Identification: The Example of the Avars, Carantanians and Moravians in the Eighth Century', in *Strategies of Distinction*, pp. 71–93 (pp. 73–74). For convenient statements of the model: Geary, *Before France and Germany*, pp. 39–75, esp. 61–64; Pohl, 'Conceptions of Ethnicity'; Herwig Wolfram, 'Einleitung oder Überlegungen zur *origo gentis*', in *Typen der Ethnogenese*, I, 19–33; idem, 'Typen der Ethnogenese'. The approach outlined by Wenskus has been pursued by other scholars also, e.g. Hermann Moisl, 'Kingship and Orally Transmitted *Stammes-tradition* among the Lombards and Franks', in *Die Bayern und ihre Nachbarn*, ed. by Herwig Wolfram and Andreas Schwarcz, vol. I (Vienna, 1985), pp. 111–19; Dick Harrison, 'Dark Age Migrations and Subjective Ethnicity: The Example of the Lombards', *Scandia*, 57 (1991), 19–36; Harald Kleinschmidt, 'The Geuissae and Bede: On the Innovativeness of Bede's Concept of the *Gens*', in *The Community, the Family and the Saint: Patterns of Power in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. by Joyce Hill and Mary Swan (Turnhout, 1998), pp. 77–102; Lotte Hedeager, 'Migration Period Europe: The Formation of a Political Mentality', in *Rituals of Power: From Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Frans Theuvs and Janet L. Nelson, TRW, 8 (Leiden, 2000), pp. 15–57; John Moreland, 'Ethnicity, Power and the English', in *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. by William O. Frazer and Andrew Tyrell (London, 2000), pp. 23–51.

⁴ Also referred to by the authors below as the ethnic paradigm (Brather), the ethnic interpretation in archaeology (Fehr), or the ethnic ascription approach (Kulikowski).

⁵ For Slavic studies, see Curta, below. For an overview of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Celtic archaeology: Timothy Champion, 'The Celt in Archaeology', in *Celticism*, ed. by Terence Brown (Amsterdam, 1996), pp. 61–78.

Renaissance Humanists had so proudly claimed as the ancestor of the Italian states. The materials from which this northern antiquity was constructed were written texts mentioning ancient barbarian peoples such as Germani and Goths, seen as the predecessors of modern northern European peoples. Fertile texts included not only Greek and Latin historical narratives relating these peoples' contact with the Mediterranean world, but also newly recovered monuments of northern civilisation: Tacitus's *Germania*, brought to light in 1451 and subsequently appropriated by northern scholars as the work of 'Tacitus noster' ('our Tacitus'); the *Codex Argenteus*, a de luxe manuscript found in the mid-sixteenth century to contain substantial fragments of the New Testament translation into Gothic attributed to the fourth-century bishop Ulfila (which facilitated arguments that Gothic was one of the two original world languages, alongside biblical Hebrew); and the *Edda* of Snorri Sturluson and other Icelandic works, adopted by scholars and litterateurs of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as evidence of the traditional religion and *carmina* of all the northern peoples.⁶ Other works, widely used during the Middle Ages, obtained a new lease of life as canonical sources, providing narrative frameworks on which modern accounts could be structured; in particular, this included Jordanes's *Getica* and Paul the Deacon's *Historia Langobardorum*, printed together in 1515.⁷ From these and other sources, northern European scholars constructed an alternative antiquity, a 'Germanic' culture continuing uninterruptedly from prehistory to modern times. The early Middle Ages, when 'Germanic' peoples assumed control of the former Roman West, was a *floruit* of this cultural continuum. The study of Germanic antiquity gave rise to a large literature on the nature of the 'Germanic' peoples,

⁶ On the reception of Tacitus: Donald Kelley, 'Tacitus Noster: The *Germania* in the Renaissance and Reformation', in his *The Writing of History and the Study of Law* (Aldershot, 1997), paper II; Tacitus: *Germania*, trans. by J. B. Rives (Oxford, 1999), pp. 66–74. On the reception of the *Codex Argenteus*: Sonia Brough, *The Goths and the Concept of Gothic in Germany from 1500 to 1750* (Frankfurt, 1985), pp. 63–102. On the reception of Snorri's *Edda*: Thomas Krömmelbein, 'Jacob Schimmelmänn und der Beginn der Snorra Edda-Rezeption in Deutschland', in *Snorri Sturluson: Beiträge zu Werk und Rezeption*, ed. by Hans Fix, RGA Ergänzungsbände, 18 (Berlin, 1998), pp. 109–30; Margaret Clunies Ross, *The Norse Muse in Britain, 1750–1820* (Trieste, 1998), pp. 41–50. On early modern appreciations of the 'Germanic' past: Klaus von See, *Barbar, Germane, Arier: Die Suche nach der Identität der Deutschen* (Heidelberg, 1994), pp. 31–82.

⁷ Use of Jordanes: e.g. Johannes Magnus, *Historia de omnibus Gothorum Sueonumque regibus* (Rome, 1554); Olaus Magnus, *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (Rome, 1555), trans. by P. Fisher and H. Higgins, 3 vols (London, 1996–99). Edition: ed. by Conrad Peutinger (Augsburg, 1515), the *editio princeps* of Jordanes; the first edition of Paul was printed in Paris the previous year.

mediated through the scholarly trends of centuries, and acting as a template for the examination of other European peoples' pasts.⁸

Unlike contemporary research into ethnicity in the social sciences, the intent of this early modern field of study was to cultivate, not analyse, ethnic identity. Through the reconstruction of individual 'tribal' identities in their prehistoric and historic phases, a broader 'Germanic' cultural identity was forged across millennia.

The study of ethnicity as a phenomenon in its own right, detached from any one specific group, expanded greatly in the second half of the twentieth century.⁹ In reaction to both the devastation wrought by nationalist and racist ideologies during two world wars and the politics of the United States 'melting pot' society, anthropologists posited ethnic identity as a function of sociological factors; ethnic consciousness was a construct, rather than an innate biological or social feature. The main trends in anthropological theory on ethnicity from the 1950s to the 1980s developed within the 'instrumentalist' approach, which saw the social construct of ethnicity essentially in terms of power relations: groups and elites manipulated emotive claims of ethnic identity in order to achieve political, social, or economic aims; where those aims were displaced (in 'melting pot' societies), the need for ethnic consciousness declined. More recent thought, though retaining the central conception of ethnicity as socially constructed and able to be instrumentally modified, has modulated this utilitarian view by positing the existence of subjective, culturally replicated ethnic identities existing prior to social manipulation, and constructed from a range of criteria which defy prescriptive definition.

Both these fields of scholarship, the *germanische Altertumskunde* of the fifteenth century onwards and the anthropological theories of ethnicity of the late twentieth century, contribute to the debate with which this volume is concerned. Culture history archaeology and *Traditionskern* ethnogenesis theory derive from the Germanist tradition. The warm reception of *Traditionskern* theory into medieval studies, however, has been facilitated by the currency of theoretical debate on the nature of ethnicity, and more generally by pervasive discussions on the nature of identity, debates influenced

⁸ Von See, *Barbar, Germane, Arier*; Frank L. Borchardt, *German Antiquity in Renaissance Myth* (Baltimore, 1971).

⁹ Jonathon M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 1–33 summarizes modern scholarship on ethnicity with particular reference to archaic Greece. A striking feature is that, for a large part, modern constructs of archaic Greek identity was an outgrowth of northern European *germanische Altertumskunde*. A useful survey is Bruce G. Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought* (Cambridge, 1989).

The *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn, v, 424 dates the first attestation of 'ethnicity' in the modern sense to 1953, and of 'ethnogenesis' to 1962; an attestation of French 'ethnogenie' is dated 1861. In that year, 'ethnogenesis' was used as the title to a poem by the American Confederate poet Henry Timrod, presented at the first meeting of the Confederate Congress in Alabama: Edd Winfield Parks, *Henry Timrod* (New York, 1964), pp. 36, 92–93. I owe this reference to Phillip Wynn.

by post-modernist thought within which 'ethnogenesis theory' has sought to position its Germanist philological approach.

This volume originated in a symposium held at the International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, in May 2000. The symposium was a reaction to the flow of works in the *Traditionskern* ethnogenesis model, particularly English-language publications, since the late 1980s, and the many colloquia and 'workshops' convened on the subject in continental Europe, the UK, and the USA in the mid- and late 1990s, greatly raising the profile of this construct. 'Barbarian' identity, not necessarily in the *Traditionskern* model, has also been the subject of important ongoing publication series and research projects, including several volumes and a range of individual papers in *The Transformation of the Roman World* series proceeding from the major international research project of that name funded by the European Science Foundation; the *Studies in Historical Archaeoethnography* series arising from conferences at San Moreno; and the *Nomen et gens* project.¹⁰ In addition, important contributions to current discussions have been made by individual scholars, most noticeably Peter Heather and Patrick Amory.¹¹ Much of this work has been published in English though undertaken by continental scholars, reflecting not only the common international use of English but also the export of scholarly interests from Europe to the USA and UK. Over the last decade, the *Traditionskern* ethnogenesis model has set the agenda for much research on the early Middle Ages, yet has received little in the way of critical discussion. The most substantial critiques to date have been two papers written independently and coincidentally both published in 1995, by Charles Bowlus and Walter Goffart, both of whom contribute to this volume.¹²

When the symposium behind this volume was being organized, concerns about the *Traditionskern* model coincided happily with current work investigating both the methodology of the culture history approach in archaeology and the historical circumstances within which modern archaeology developed. This work arises in part from the current process of critical self-analysis being undertaken throughout the discipline of archaeology, and specifically from self-appraisal by German archaeologists of their own professional history.¹³ Two of the papers in this volume stem from work currently being

¹⁰ TRW: *Kingdoms of the Empire; Strategies of Distinction*. StHistArch: series ed. Giorgio Ausenda, 4 vols to date (Woodbridge, 1995–). *Nomen et gens: Nomen et gens: Zur historischen Aussagekraft frühmittelalterlicher Personennamen*, ed. by Dieter Geuenich, Wolfgang Haubrichs, and Jörg Jarnut, RGA Ergänzungsbände, 16 (Berlin, 1997).

¹¹ Heather, *Goths and Romans*; idem, *Goths*; Heather has also edited one of the StHistArch vols: *The Visigoths from the Migration Period to the Seventh Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*, StHistArch, 4 (Woodbridge, 1999). Amory, *People and Identity* is the most thorough and thoughtful work in this area to date.

¹² Bowlus, 'Ethnogenesis Models'; Goffart, 'Germanic Antiquity Today'.

¹³ Archaeological self-analysis: e.g. *Nationalism, Politics, and the Practice of Archaeology*, ed. by Philip L. Kohl and Clare Fawcett (Cambridge, 1995); *Nationalism and Archaeology in*

undertaken at the University of Freiburg under the umbrella of the major research project *Identitäten und Alteritäten (Identities and Alterities)*.¹⁴

The central emphases of this collection are methodology and historiography: the means by which sources can, and can not, be exploited and the examination of the circumstances within which currently accepted methodologies developed. The focus on methodology was chosen as a check to the strong tendency of both current work on 'ethnogenesis' and older 'culture history' archaeological research towards theoretical modelling without a concomitant critical appraisal of their methodological basis. The papers in Section I below generally address an ongoing debate about how written sources can be used: what needs to be understood in regard to their purposes and how their contents can be utilized. Overt debate was stimulated by the publication in 1988 of Walter Goffart's *The Narrators of Barbarian History*; it is noteworthy that this was a work on early medieval historiography, not primarily concerned with the nature of ethnicity. Goffart's sustained argument, that literary analysis of texts and the elucidation of the immediate circumstances of their composition are the keys to understanding their purpose, runs counter to the role of literary texts in *Traditionskern* ethnogenesis theory as windows onto the orally transmitted *Traditionskern*. His work prompted reiterations and justifications of this approach.¹⁵ The papers in Section II address proto-historical archaeology in the context of a wider current of self-criticism within the discipline of archaeology, examining the methodological assumptions and intellectual agenda which

Europe, ed. by Margarita Díaz-Andreu and Timothy Champion (London, 1996); *Cultural Identity and Archaeology: The Construction of European Communities*, ed. by Paul Graves-Brown, Siân Jones, and Clive Gamble (London, 1996); *Nationalism and Archaeology: Scottish Archaeological Forum*, ed. by John A. Atkinson, Iain Banks, and Jerry O'Sullivan (Glasgow, 1996); Jones, *Archaeology of Ethnicity*. For German archaeology: *Archaeology, Ideology and Society: The German Experience*, ed. by Heinrich Härke (Frankfurt, 2000).

¹⁴ For a description of the project and list of publications from the sub-section 'Ethnische Einheiten im frühgeschichtlichen Europa: Archäologische Forschung und ihre politische Instrumentalisierung', see the useful Web site: <http://www.phil.uni-freiburg.de/sfb541/c4>; and *Eine hervorragend nationale Wissenschaft: Deutsche Prähistoriker zwischen 1900 und 1995*, ed. by Heiko Steuer, RGA Ergänzungsbände, 29 (Berlin, 2001).

¹⁵ Goffart, *Narrators of Barbarian History*. His *Barbarians and Romans AD 418–584: The Techniques of Accommodation* (Princeton, 1980), pp. 3–39, esp. 21–22, discussed the tendentious nature of scholarship on barbarian prehistory; it is instructive to note, twenty years later, that the Vienna school did not then appear substantially different from other scholarship. For exchanges in subsequent debate: Wolfram, 'Origo et religio'; Goffart, 'Germanic Antiquity Today'; Pohl, 'Tradition, Ethnogenese, und literarische Gestaltung'; Hans Hubert Anton, 'Origo gentis — Volksgeschichte: Zur Auseinandersetzung mit Walter Goffarts Werk *The Narrators of Barbarian History*', in *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. by Anton Scharer and Georg Scheibelreiter (Vienna, 1994), pp. 262–307; Johann Weissensteiner, 'Cassiodorus/Jordanes als Geschichtsschreiber', in the same volume, pp. 308–25; Bowlus, 'Ethnogenesis Models'.

lie behind the construction of current interpretative models. The culture history model, too, has previously been subject to criticism, but debate has been less engaged.¹⁶ Section III comprises two Responses to the papers: the first from Walter Pohl, one of the leading figures of the Vienna school; the other from Charles Bowlus, author of one of the few critiques of the *Traditionskern* ethnogenesis model.¹⁷

The first two papers of Section I discuss the aims, tactics, and validity of *Traditionskern* ethnogenesis theory. Walter Goffart throws open to doubt beliefs that barbarian peoples of the early Middle Ages were more concerned than other cultures with their past, or that they perpetuated any articulated narrative of their past which could form the basis for a genuine tradition. He discusses how scholarship continues to frame the history of the barbarian peoples in terms dictated not by the sources but by modern concerns, and outlines the way certain concepts such as *Urheimat* ('original homeland') and migration have traditionally served to render the isolated facts known or reconstructed about the pre-medieval past into significant narratives. Goffart contrasts the recent presentation of Germanic history in the works of Herwig Wolfram with older approaches, and challenges the claims to distance and distinction in the new model. His critique of the method of 'exegetical history' by which writings in the *Traditionskern* model proceed, and the tactics employed in responding to critics, will be appreciated by anyone who has struggled to reconcile these modern writings with the classical and medieval texts they cite.

Alexander Callander Murray, in the most detailed historiographic critique to date of *Traditionskern* ethnogenesis, also disputes its practitioners' claim to distance themselves from earlier models of *germanische Altertumskunde*. He identifies this claim as the feature which has most attracted adherents to the model.¹⁸ Murray places the work of Reinhard Wenskus, considered seminal for current thought, in the context of earlier historical work, pointing out that Wenskus's view of 'peoples' as polyethnic was not new to him, or claimed by him to be so. Instead, Murray argues, Wenskus's construct complemented two current constructs, the 'lordship theory' and the continuity thesis, both originating in the 1930s. 'Lordship theory' rejected nineteenth-century belief in the early Germanic tribes as proto-democracies in favour of a Germanic society dominated by aristocratic lords. The Germanic continuity thesis of Otto Höfler, also originating in the 1930s, sought to identify a millennia-long Germanic culture based in irrational

¹⁶ Veit, 'Ethnic Concepts in German Prehistory' and other papers in the same volume. A useful overview is Guy Halsall, *Early Medieval Cemeteries: An Introduction to Burial Archaeology in the Post-Roman West*, New Light on the Dark Ages, 1 (Skelmorlie, 1995), pp. 56–61.

¹⁷ Bowlus, 'Ethnogenesis Models'.

¹⁸ A recent statement acknowledging use of older *germanische Altertumskunde* research by work in the *Traditionskern* ethnogenesis approach is Pohl, 'Memory, Identity, and Power', pp. 9–10 and n. 2: older research provided 'an impressive stock of ethnographic and mythological parallels to prove the basic authenticity of [medieval origin legends]', the material for current approaches.

religious rites of sacral kingship and embodied in names, genealogy, and myth. Murray describes how both sets of ideas led Wenskus to dissociate ethnic consciousness from the mass of members of a group, because he saw ethnic identity as a form of political power restricted to the nobility; this separation of ethnic consciousness from populations was a slippery point of departure for Wenskus's followers. Murray also highlights, as a central flaw in the manner by which 'ethnogenesis' arguments proceed, the confusion of philological reconstruction with historical evidence. Using 'asterisk philology', Wenskus traced the *Traditionskern* of the Franks to a North Sea origin, justifying belief in supposed Scandinavian-style ritual kingship. By contrasting this picture with the actual evidence for Frankish traditions, Murray highlights how tendentious Wenskus's construct is. Not just the details, but the actual nature of evidence is qualitatively different; the sources are silent on what Wenskus called 'gentile tradition' ('ethnic discourse' in newer terminology).

The papers of Michael Kulikowski and Andrew Gillett discuss individual elements of the *Traditionskern* model as case studies of the wider debate. Kulikowski examines the assumption common to various forms of ethnogenesis theory that 'though our sources distort barbarian reality, we can get behind their words to discover what barbarian collectivities were really like' (p. 74). He approaches the problem of whether this is so through the debate whether barbarian groups were mobile armies or roving agriculturalist families, and asks whether the available evidence actually permits the question to be discussed in any meaningful way. His presentation of the evidence available for the activities of barbarian groups, in particular Gothic groups between 376 and 418, is a stark warning of the limitations of our evidence, highlighting the danger of constructing theoretical models on the basis of unprovable 'facts'. He addresses not only the social structure of barbarian groups, but also a range of other issues: the nature of the treaty of 382, the constitutional position of Alaric I, and the terms of the settlement of 418. Noting the conceptual gap between the terminology of the sources and those we employ, he warns against attempting to construct technical vocabulary of the sort which is such a prominent feature in *Traditionskern* ethnogenesis writings.

My own paper addresses the theme of 'gentile tradition' or 'ethnic discourse' criticized by Murray by examining a specific type of source claimed in *Traditionskern* ethnogenesis theory to demonstrate such a discourse: royal titles. The interpretation of the major early medieval histories, notably Jordanes and Paul the Deacon, is a central point of contention between proponents and critics of *Traditionskern* theory. But 'micro-texts' such as names, titles, and isolated Germanic words (e.g. *trulli* in the passage cited from Olympiodorus above) also play important roles in the ethnogenesis construct; filtered and reconstructed through Germanic philology, the interpretation of such evidence provides infrastructure for the construct's broader narrative. The paper presents a lengthy table setting out evidence for the official forms of western rulers' titles in the post-imperial centuries. The table demonstrates that titles in the style *rex Gothorum* or *rex Francorum*, associating the royal office with a specific ethnic identity, were not normative; kings were known as *rex* or *dominus*, conventional Roman titles. The late development of the titles *rex Francorum* and *rex gentis Langobardorum* as standard

within their respective realms is an intriguing but specific problem. What is most significant is that arguments based on 'ethnic' royal titles as genuine barbarian self-description are not supported by the evidence. Barbarian titles need to be situated in the context of Roman conventions of 'client' kingship, not that of an 'ethnic discourse'.

The final paper in Section I, by Derek Fewster, is not directly concerned with 'ethnogenesis' theory, but addresses a more modern invention of tradition. The manufacture of a largely artificial medieval past for Finland is a modern phenomenon, and Fewster draws on both scholarly publications and popular material to illustrate the motives and stages of this creation. Contingencies of history have destroyed the main repositories of documentation of Finnish history, providing wide scope for scholarly creativity, spurred by nationalist sentiments. Fewster's examples display the exploitation of conceptions current in early-twentieth-century northern *Altertumskunde*, from the scholarly manufacture of the Finnish 'saga' *Kalevala* and the inflation of evidence for hillforts to provide a symbol of a militaristic past, to the introduction of supposed *Tracht* ('traditional dress') into popular clothing styles. Fewster illustrates his argument with a table equating key elements of the modern image of medieval Finland with the sources on which the images were based and with their modern political exploitations.

The papers in Section II address the methodology and the historical development of the 'culture history' model in archaeology. Sebastian Brather schematizes the approaches taken in the 'ethnic paradigm' of modern scholarship, which equates archaeological cultures and linguistic borders with ethnic groups, in order to make explicit the methodological assumptions supporting the construct. He draws on evidence for the Alamanni to provide examples for each of the five stages of the system he describes. He argues that for each stage the available material is more naturally interpreted as evidence for social or cultural phenomena, not for ethnic identity. The development of new cultural traits in Late Antiquity, such as particular styles of armaments and ornaments and the appearance of row-grave cemeteries, reveals the effects of patterns of trade, communication, acculturation, and political boundaries, but not discrete ethnic identities. These suggestions give glimpses of a far more complex proto-historical period, one characterized by multiple routes of reciprocal material and cultural exchange rather than the progressive advances of migrating tribes. Brather questions the adequacy of archaeological evidence for the investigation of issues of identity.

Hubert Fehr reviews the origins of modern scholarship on the identification of ethnic distinctions in early medieval row graves in Gaul, focusing on the fundamental issue of distinguishing between Germanic and Roman elements in the sites. Dominant archaeological views see the two categories as easily distinguishable: Roman graves by their sarcophagi, barbarian by the grave goods containing ethnically specific items of the group's *Tracht*. Fehr discusses the context of nationalistically motivated studies in which early medieval burial archaeology developed after World War I (as an element of *Volksgeschichte*, 'people's history'), and the formative studies of the 'row-grave civilisation' by Hans Zeiss and Joachim Werner in the 1940s and early 1950s. He describes how Zeiss created and Werner elaborated a methodology for sharply distinguishing between Roman and Germanic peoples in Spanish and Gallic graves by importing into

early medieval archaeology key concepts from earlier place-name and folklore studies, particularly the concept of *Tracht*, and how this approach dovetailed with the objectives for archaeology issued by the Nazi regime during the occupation of France. Fehr traces the impact of this methodology on current work.

Florin Curta, who moves discussion from Germanic to Slavic archaeology, also examines the impact of state directives and political concerns on archaeological aims and methodologies. Curta outlines the shift from comparative linguistics to archaeology as the 'authoritative discourse' in Slavic ethnogenesis. The starting point of the newly authoritative Slavic archaeological thought was the work of the German archaeologist Gustaf Kossinna, who was originally a trained philologist before turning to archaeology and developing the 'culture history' approach. Slavic, like Germanic, archaeology developed nationalistic implications and was mobilized for ideological purposes in east European states to counter German territorial and cultural claims. This was particularly striking in the USSR, where the development of a Marxist archaeology interpreting material evidence on the basis of class conflict was stifled by a directive from Stalin for archaeologists to concentrate instead on ethnic history. In the postwar period, Julian Bromley's concept of ethnicity as a socially real phenomenon affected a shift in Soviet archaeology away from the attribution of individual archaeological sites to various ethnic groups, towards tracing the origin of an ethnicity. Notwithstanding theoretical developments, Slavic archaeology has followed the trajectory begun by its nineteenth-century predecessor, historical linguistics, in pursuing an ultimately Romantic view of 'peoples', or archaeological cultures, 'as actors on the historical stage' (p. 218).

The approaches in these papers are by no means homogeneous, but readers will discover intersecting themes between them. The philological/linguistic origins of studies in European prehistory show through the accretions of later disciplinary approaches. Florin Curta addresses this explicitly with regard to Slavic archaeology; the same observation underlies the criticisms of Murray and Gillett on the uses of names and titles as evidence of ethnogenetic processes unattested by historical sources, and those of Goffart and Kulikowski on the misleading usage of words such as *gens* ('people') as technical terms with precise meaning implying an entire theoretical construct. Similarly, the Romantic influence on nineteenth-century studies, conceiving of peoples as possessing a fundamental national character (*Geist*) external to historical change, is by no means spent. The 'culture history' construct, analysed not only in the papers of Brather, Fehr, and Curta, but also by Kulikowski, is predicated on the idea of an essential quality of each people expressed through its material artefacts; and the mapping of migration routes and *Urheimat*, discussed by Goffart, Kulikowski, Fewster, and Curta, is a pictorial presentation of the incarnation of 'peoples' as historical actors. The concept of the maintenance of ethnic traditions over millennia, borne by oral traditions, is clearly rooted in the Romantic framework, but the idea of a 'gentile tradition' or 'ethnic discourse' as a thought system which supplanted Roman imperial ideology, addressed by Murray and Gillett, is perhaps not far removed. The exploitation of key texts remains a central methodological problem, not only for explicitly text-based approaches in history, but, as Curta observes, also for some aspects of archaeology. Most contributors

comment on the mismatch between the nature of the sources we have, whether written or material, and the purposes for which they are often interrogated. In light of the sources' mute response to our questions on ethnic identity, and the lack of true barbarian voices, Kulikowski and Brather urge the pursuit of research founded on the types of information our sources offer, rather than model-driven theoretical approaches.

Section III contains two responses to the foregoing chapters, by Walter Pohl and Charles Bowlus; they descend from the aim of the original symposium to stimulate genuine debate, rather than 'ritual declamation'.¹⁹ Walter Pohl, a prominent spokesman for the *Traditionskern* model, gives a perspective from Vienna on the papers of Sections I and II. He believes that the criticisms there underestimate both the extent of the break made by Wenskus from the biological assumptions of earlier (and later) scholarship in *germanische Altertumskunde*, and the distance from Wenskus's ideas achieved by subsequent work. Pohl reviews the central *testimonia* for barbarian ethnic continuity: the continuity of certain group names, at least some of which were self-designations, from Tacitean into early medieval times; and the presence of non-classical materials, Germanic names and religious motifs, in some medieval works, most notably Jordanes's *Getica* and the *Origo gentis Langobardorum* and related texts. He argues that each of these intrusions into Latin narratives are evidence for a genuine 'mythomoteur' (in Anthony Smith's phrase), which was so strongly known and expected by its audience that it could not be passed over even by sceptical authors. Pohl argues for a looser understanding of *Traditionskern* than Wenskus proposed, seeing a range of practices and competing narratives, including both Germanic traditions and classically derived narratives, as coexisting and equally liable to be drawn upon selectively in order to fulfil 'ethnic practices' by exploiting unreflected self-definitions. Concerning archaeological approaches, Pohl has earlier commented on the inability of select material signs and behaviours to act as defining markers of ethnicity,²⁰ but nonetheless cautions against the wholesale abandonment of identifying archaeological cultures with historically attested groups. Noting the difficulties presented by both written and material sources, Pohl argues in favour of the need for theoretical models to clarify approaches to texts.

Charles Bowlus focuses attention on the pragmatic issue of whether or not models of the processes of ethnogenesis can accommodate known evidence for the peoples they describe. In addition to examples drawn from the papers of Sections I and II of this volume, Bowlus examines models proposed for the ethnogeneses of three groups in particular: the Lombards, the Burgundians, and the Bavarians. Focus on the last in particular is revealing, for (as Murray notes) attention to issues of barbarian identity in recent scholarship other than German-language work has largely focused on the Goths, thanks to the publications of Wolfram, Heather, and Amory. The Bavarians, however, have long played a major and problematic role in the study of tribal formation, not least because the sources for their earliest history are intractably scanty. This very paucity of

¹⁹ Kulikowski below, p. 70, n. 6.

²⁰ Pohl, 'Telling the Difference'.

evidence renders the Bavarians particularly susceptible to theoretical modelling. The construction of scenarios from minimal material makes particularly plain the underpinnings which support them. None of the theoretically necessary conditions for the ethnogenesis of a new people are evident in the case of the Bavarians, and it remains an open question whether this group was formed by the coalescing of members around an intruding Germanic tribal core (in the ethnogenesis model), or whether Bavarian identity was autochthonic, descending from the formerly Romanized population of the trans-alpine province of Rhaetia.²¹ In microcosm, this debate sums up many of the tensions between current views of the post-Roman West.

It is the reader's role to judge between the papers and the responses (noting that the authors of the eight papers had not, at the time of publication, read the respondents' views, nor the two respondents each other's). It may, however, be the editor's prerogative to take the dialogue a further step. The call by proponents of the ethnogenesis model for a consciously theoretical approach to the complex question of past ethnicities, and the invocation of ambiguities and inconsistencies in the evidence, seems to complement the tenor of contemporary, post-instrumentalist and post-modernist research on ethnicity. But students of the period need to be aware of the much older foundations of ethnogenesis theories, and of their implications for understanding the Middle Ages as a projection of barbarian prehistory, not of post-Graeco-Roman culture. They should also be aware that this discourse does not exist in isolation; the study of ethnicity in Late Antiquity is not confined to the western barbarians, though current medievalist scholarship gives the impression that ethnicity is a uniquely pressing issue for those peoples. Recent discussions of other ethnicities are often informed by contemporary anthropological and sociological thought, and proceed without recourse to models akin to the *Traditionskern* construct.²²

The validity of any model must be tested by the degree to which it embraces the observable features of the data it seeks to represent. 'Ethnogenesis' writings display discomfort over the examination of texts as written artefacts. The Vienna school dismisses Goffart's *The Narrators of Barbarian History* for describing the works of Jordanes and Paul the Deacon as 'purely literary' creations. This misrepresents an argument founded simply on acknowledging the literary nature of pre-modern historical writing, and on the traditional questions of textual criticism concerning the circumstances of production of each text; these fundamentals are far from unique to

²¹ Cf. the pre-Stalinist Soviet view of the Slavs discussed in Curta's paper.

²² See, e.g., the papers in the recent collections, Mitchell and Greatrex (eds), *Ethnicity and Culture*; and *Identities in the Eastern Mediterranean in Antiquity*, ed. by Graeme Clarke = *Mediterranean Archaeology*, 11 (1998), esp. Fergus Millar, 'Ethnic Identity in the Roman Near East, AD 325–450: Language, Religion, and Culture', pp. 159–76. See also, e.g., William D. Burgess, 'Isaurian Names and the Ethnic Identity of the Isaurians in Late Antiquity', *Ancient World*, 21 (1990), 109–21.

Goffart.²³ *Traditionskern* theory operates at a distance from its sources, preferring to look for alleged access to ethnic traditions and discourse in a seemingly homogeneous body of material and to accommodate this to its models, rather than to examine the specific dynamics of individual works.²⁴ Both ancient sources and current sociological thought serve particular purposes in the construction of the *Traditionskern* model: sources are represented as residues of mythic narratives propagating ethnic identity; current sociological thought is adduced to justify the role given to sources:

Social anthropologists currently see ethnicity as 'constituted through social contact'[,] where 'systematic distinctions between insiders and outsiders' have to be applied. [...] Difference only matters, as Pierre Bourdieu has argued, as long as there is somebody capable of 'making the difference'; it is a relational category. Thus communication plays a key role, of which the early medieval texts that have come down to us are important traces, not just chance reflections. Therefore, they can only be understood properly if we do not see them as evidence for the natural existence of ethnic communities, but as part of strategies to give shape to these communities.²⁵

²³ Dismissal: Pohl, 'Tradition, Ethnogenese, und literarische Gestaltung'; idem, 'Memory, Identity, and Power', pp. 10–11. Literary craft of late antique/early medieval authors: e.g. Brian Croke, 'Cassiodorus and the *Getica* of Jordanes', *Classical Review*, 82 (1987), 117–34 (pp. 122–29); Joaquín Martínez Pizarro, *A Rhetoric of the Scene: Dramatic Narrative in the Early Middle Ages* (Toronto, 1989); Martin Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century*, trans. by Christopher Carroll (Cambridge, 2001), esp. p. 7. Compare the image of classical ethnography as a progressive and investigative specialist field in Pohl, 'Telling the Difference', pp. 61–62 with, e.g., Charles King, 'The Veracity of Ammianus Marcellinus' Description of the Huns', *American Journal of Ancient History*, 12 (1987 [1995]), 77–95; T. D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca, 1998), pp. 95–96, 109–11, 184–86.

²⁴ Cf. Pohl, 'Memory, Identity, and Power', pp. 10–11, invoking but then dismissing the study of 'typologies de sources'.

²⁵ Pohl, 'Telling the Difference', p. 21. A later comment seems to refute the view that individual texts functioned to reinforce identity, only to reassign that duty to 'certain recurring narratives and images [...] regarded as central', including 'direct reference to the Lombard origin myth, 350 years after it was first written down' (i.e. Paul the Deacon, *Hist. Lang.*, I 7, cited in a history written in the late tenth century; Pohl, 'Memory, Identity, and Power', pp. 25–26). This is no true concession; the elusive *Tradition*, not the extant and examinable texts, remains the agent of group identity. (Indeed, the alleged evidence for 'direct reference to the Lombard origin myth' surely attests the currency not of any independent 'origin myth', but of the text of Paul the Deacon's *Hist. Lang.*, one of the most popular histories of the Middle Ages; cf. MGH Ss rer Lang, pp. 28–43.)

Each of the last two sentences of this statement on the use of sources contains a programmatic logical break. Current thought sees ethnicity as a negotiated act, reliant on communication; but this insight does not transform our extant sources into 'important traces' of this particular communication, any more than our desire to have access to any event or process in the past transforms the available sources into actual witnesses. As several of the papers below reveal, our literary sources, like the archaeological ones, are often demonstrably not communications of ethnic difference. Likewise, regarding the final sentence, acknowledging that our sources are not evidence for one model of ethnicity does make them proof of another. Our sources have very little to say about the nature of ethnicity, as opposed to uncritical recognition of ethnic identity, and the unconscious assumptions behind whatever beliefs the authors may have had are generally far beyond our grasp.

As with the passage just cited, the engagement of ethnogenesis theory with contemporary thought occurs in order to justify, not shape, the model.²⁶ The *Traditionskern* approach now embraces current thought on the negotiated, not fixed, nature of ethnicity. Concomitant with this acquisition is the conclusion that, having eliminated the material and behavioural signs traditionally seen as defining barbarian identities, only the postulated *Traditionskern*, in the form of an oral narrative, remains as a possible binding force of ethnic identity.²⁷ Anthropological models are put to use to support a construct which derives from a different academic tradition.

The model of tribal identity outlined in *Traditionskern* theory is highly moulded, not one suggested by the sources. The Scandinavian origin of the Goths in Jordanes's *Getica* (and of the Lombards in the *Origo gentis Langobardorum*²⁸) is seen as a genuine barbarian myth.²⁹ That the Amazons were abandoned Gothic women, which Jordanes also relates, is not.³⁰ The Amazons are an obvious, classically derived topos; so too is the island of Scandza, cited from named classical geographers.³¹ Both serve evident literary functions: Scandza is set in Oceanus, the impenetrable border of the civilized world and gateway to the unknown and fantastic, and is populated by barbarians neatly

²⁶ Hence Bourdieu's phrase 'strategies of distinction' is rotated, in the book of that title, to refer to horizontal (ethnic) differences rather than Bourdieu's vertical (social) stratification; Pohl, 'Introduction: Strategies of Distinction', pp. 5–6. Contrast the assessment by Brather, below, that archaeology is equipped to address social, rather than ethnic, differentiations (in line with Bourdieu's original intention); the position of textual historians is similar.

²⁷ Elimination of traditional signs: Pohl, 'Telling the Difference'. Narrative as sole defining factor: Pohl, 'Memory, Identity, and Power', pp. 25–26.

²⁸ Note that the Codex Gothanus version of the *Origo* places the Lombard origin in northern Gaul: *Historia Langobardorum codicis Gothani* 2 in MGH Ss rer Lang.

²⁹ Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, pp. 36–40.

³⁰ Jordanes, *Getica*, 44, 49–52, 56–57. Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, pp. 28, 390 n. 87, 400 n. 104. Cf. Wagner, *Getica*, p. 79 n. 48.

³¹ Jordanes, *Getica*, 4–9, naming Orosius, Virgil, Ptolemy, Strabo, and Pomponius Mela.

summarizing classical stereotypes; the Amazons introduce a digest of classical history which makes the Goths leading figures in the major events of the ancient world from the Trojan War and Marathon to Caesar's conquests.³² Why are the Amazons not seen, for example, as classicized evidence for a mythic memory of a female warrior class? The identification of barbarian *gentes* with warrior elites does not allow it: the conception of an ethnic group is essentially military and political; ethnicity is an inherently masculine category.³³ One wonders what the Gothic women who mocked their men for surrendering Ravenna to Belisarius's army would have made of this.³⁴ The theory precedes the source and determines the application of its data.

Debates over details of the *Traditionskern* model — whether it was the royalty or the nobility who were the bearers of tradition, whether the inner elite of true members of the *gens* consisted of dozens or hundreds of noble families, whether the 'core of tradition' consisted of individuals or of texts and discourses — do not seem to offer significant advances to our understanding.³⁵ The concept of ethnogenesis as a means to understand events and thought in the early medieval period inherently privileges ethnic identity — specifically Germanic identity — as a historical force. A fundamental aspect of the most innovative work on the early Middle Ages in the early twentieth century, common to Fustel de Coulanges, Dopsch, and Pirenne, was recognition of the survival and continuity of Roman thought and practices. *Germanische Altertumskunde* has

³² On Oceanus in classical geographical thought and fantasy: James S. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought: Geography, Exploration, and Fiction* (Princeton, 1992), pp. 11–26 (for Jordanes's direct debt to classical images of Oceanus, note e.g. the conventional portrayal of Oceanus as torpid: Romm, *Edges of the Earth*, pp. 21–23; cf. Jordanes, *Getica*, 5). Barbarian stereotypes: summarized by the three tribes described at length (Jordanes, *Getica*, 19–21: the Adogit dwell beyond the normal laws of nature; the Scirefennae are pre-agricultural; and the Suehans trade in horses and furs, the characteristic items of Mediterranean trade with northern barbarians) before the impressive catalogue of the *turba nationum* (*Getica*, 22–24). Classical digest: *Getica*, 58–68. Cf. Goffart, *Narrators of Barbarian History*, pp. 80–82, 88–89.

³³ Military conception: Pohl, 'Introduction: Strategies of Distinction', p. 4: 'One was a Goth, or a Frank, in the full sense as long as one maintained direct participation in the affairs of the *gens*', i.e. 'war and political business'; idem, 'Telling the Difference', p. 67: 'Only relatively small elite groups, mostly warriors, could maintain direct participation in [the processes by] which the *gens* reproduced its identity. [. . .] They were part of an international warrior culture [. . .]'; cf. idem, below at nn. 50–51, 63: armies are the point of reference for describing the actions of a *gens*. Recent studies of medieval orality stress the role of women in preserving social memory and therefore group identity; see the overview of Elisabeth van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900–1200* (Toronto, 1999), pp. 1–16.

³⁴ Proc., Wars, VI 29.34.

³⁵ E.g. Peter Heather, 'The Creation of the Visigoths', in *Visigoths*, ed. by Heather, pp. 41–92 (pp. 73–90, esp. 73–75). Cf. Guy Halsall, 'Movers and Shakers: The Barbarians and the Fall of Rome', *Early Medieval Europe*, 8 (1999), 131–45 (pp. 138–40).

traditionally been concerned with another continuity, that of Germanic cultural identity. The current ethnogenesis model endeavours to resolve these two continuities, though favouring the Germanic, however much qualified.³⁶ We should ask whether this concern with recreating ethnic identities does not frame the wrong questions. Some of the actions of the barbarian rulers of the post-imperial states are observable, and their use of Roman and Christian thought and practice can be outlined. We may wish to know more about their ethnic beliefs, but the construction of theoretical models will not make up for the want of informative evidence. Perhaps, as regards the nature of ethnicity, we should heed the advice that 'true confusion is better than false clarity' and move on.³⁷

³⁶ So Pohl, 'Introduction: The Empire and the Integration of Barbarians', in *Kingdoms of the Empire*, p. 5, sees the study of 'certain types of community', namely the *gens*, as having superior explanatory status than '[m]odes of production and cultural styles' for late antique developments.

³⁷ Giles Constable, 'The Many Middle Ages: Medieval Studies in Europe as Seen from America', in *Bilan et perspectives des études médiévales en Europe*, ed. by Jacqueline Hamesse, *Textes et études du Moyen Âge*, 4 (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1995), pp. 1–22 (p. 22).

SECTION I

Does the Distant Past Impinge on the Invasion Age Germans?

WALTER GOFFART

Memories of the distant past are believed to have a decisive part in 'ethnogenesis' — an elaborate term for how people coalesce into a people. My discussion is limited to the non-Roman side of Late Antiquity in Europe, often called the Invasion or Migration Age (*Völkerwanderung*). Within this period, 'ethnogenesis' tends to keep company with a theory that barbarian tribes formed and re-formed through the activity of *Traditionskerne*, 'nuclei of tradition' furnished by ancient families whose connections to the near and distant past gave a focus to multicultural recruits and encouraged them to associate and identify themselves with the ancient tradition promoted by the leading families — families that, among other things, perpetuated the tribe name. This theory has enough adherents at present to rank as a certified social process.¹ It prompts me to ask to what extent Goths, Vandals, Gepids, Alamans,

¹ The theory, most closely associated with Reinhard Wenskus and Herwig Wolfram (nn. 38 and 39, below), meets with reverent assent. See Luis A. García Moreno, 'History through Family Names in the Visigothic Kingdoms of Toulouse and Toledo', *Cassiodorus: Rivista di studi sulla tarda antichità*, 4 (1998), 163–84 (p. 183): 'These circumstances [...] strengthens [*sic*] the *Neues Lehre*, particularly those concerning theories expressed by R. Wenskus that deal with the basic importance of the great noble lineages as bearers of ethnic traditions and leaders in the ethnogenesis processes of the *Völkerwanderungszeit* peoples.' García Moreno admits that there are grudging holdouts, 'perhaps prey to some anachronistic ideological prejudices'.

Patrick Geary affirms that Wenskus and Wolfram 'demonstrated' this nucleus-of-tradition-based form of ethnogenesis; like García Moreno, he asks us to regard it as a scientific certainty, not a hypothesis; 'Ethnic Identity as a Situational Construct', p. 22. Nothing, in fact, has been 'demonstrated', or for that matter, disproved.

Bastarnae, Rugi, etc., were in touch with memories of distant ancestors or distant homelands and affected by them.

For a start, we might pay attention to how we moderns relate to our distant pasts. My comments are anecdotal, without pretence of scientific method. Much ethnogenetic talk allows itself to be remote from experienced life; 'archaic people' hunger, allegedly, for tradition, such as 'memor[ies] of divine origin'.² Did early Germans remember differently from us? The English novelist Evelyn Waugh once remarked, 'The activity of our ant-hill is preserved by a merciful process of oblivion.'³ Historians need to notice that forgetfulness is as socially beneficial as remembrance. In a story recently floating among my colleagues in Toronto, a history student is reputed to have said to his instructor, 'Sir, you mentioned a World War II. I assume, then, that there must have been a World War I. What was that?' Instructors who heard of World War I from parents with first-hand memories of it need a little effort to sympathize with this almost incredibly uninformed student born in the 1970s; yet the calendar exonerates his ignorance. Each generation has to learn the past for itself, and large sectors of time fall through the cracks. Memory rarely carries back more than three generations, unless refreshed by writing or shrines and ritual. Three *medieval* generations incorporated little more than fifty years of memory.⁴ A century and a half seems a moderate period, but surely too long for a collectivity to remember a comprehensive past except with artificial aids.

The fifty or somewhat more years we remember from personal experience embrace only recent times, current events. The distant past is quite different. It does not cling to an individual or a family; it is collective and deliberately taught or adopted. Possible distant pasts are multiple. The French of today can choose to descend from Lascaux cave people or Gallo-Celts or Franks or none of the above; the English can descend from Stonehenge builders or Celto-Britons or Saxons or Normans. These are learned choices. Henri Boulainvilliers, an eighteenth-century French political writer, affirmed that he and his fellow aristocrats descended from conquering Franks, whereas commoners stemmed from the conquered Gauls; the Frankish conquest of c. AD 500, a

² There is much talk of myth, archaic peoples and their inclinations, and the like in Wolfram, '*Origo et religio*', in which erudite conjecture outweighs information. With similar detachment from real life, the influential article by Geary (n. 1) is predominantly abstract and aloof from ethnic identity as perceived by human beings.

³ Evelyn Waugh, *Remote People* (London, 1931), pp. 180–81.

⁴ I'm grateful to my Toronto colleague, Isabelle Cochelin, for pressing me hard on the duration of generations and arriving at this cautious figure. Per contra, Wolfram, '*Origo et religio*', p. 35 n. 66, 'it is perfectly credible that one might remember one's great-grandfather.' No doubt many persons have some sort of memory of great-grandfathers; but such links are no more the norm today than they were in the past, and the chance of meaningful communication between these remote generations is slim. Wolfram, *ibid.*, p. 36, reproaches me for having less sympathy for continuity than he does.

remote event, justified the privileged status of the French aristocracy.⁵ This is a typical instance of how distant times can be deployed for the needs of the present. The following is another example: by the creative effort of Christian prelates and authors, the 'Age of the Martyrs' was much fuller and more tangible in the sixth century than it had been three or four hundred years earlier, when, as the future learned to believe, troops of Christians were being butchered.⁶

Normally ignored, the distant past impinges on the present by deliberate choices, nourished by scholarship, erudition, or religion. It does not exist 'out there', independently, as though an impassive river of memory flowed from a fountainhead downstream into the present. The Cambridge historian Eric Hobsbawm earned deserved praise for alerting us to the 'invention of tradition'.⁷ Invented tradition strolls hand-in-hand with the distant past, an intermediary between the opacity of remote centuries and the desire of the present to appropriate alluring days of yore.

The distant past, of which no one has a direct memory, bears on what persons want their collectivity to be or to become. Typically, Anglo-Saxonism in the nineteenth century justified the English as world rulers.⁸ In a different setting, the contrasting states of nature evoked by Hobbes and Locke were creative fictions, but treated as though historically real by persons who should have known better. Out of scattered shreds of memory, randomly floating in communities, social leaders more or less consciously create one or the other distant past that present needs call for. The current excitement around 'ethnogenesis' may well be yet another attempt to serve up remote times in a form adapted to present challenges (challenges perhaps more visible from central Europe than San Diego).⁹ When a recent article labours at the anachronism of having

⁵ Marc Bloch, 'Sur les grandes invasions, quelques positions de problèmes' (1945), in his *Mélanges historiques*, 2 vols (Paris, 1963), I, 90–109 (pp. 93–94), who cautions that the guiding ideas were developed before Boulainvilliers. Boulainvilliers's historical works were posthumously published (i.e. after 1722): *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th edn (New York, 1910), IV, 319. On the background to Boulainvilliers's layering of Frenchmen, see Susan Reynolds, 'Medieval *Origines gentium* and the Community of the Realm', *History*, 68 (1983), 380.

⁶ These comments are prompted by Felice Lifshitz (Florida International), who has kindly let me consult work of hers in progress. She bears no responsibility for what I have made of her ideas.

⁷ *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by Eric Hobsbawm and Terry Ranger (Cambridge, 1983): an illuminating collection of examples by the editors and other authors.

⁸ Hugh A. MacDougall, *Racial Myth in English History: Trojans, Teutons, and Anglo-Saxons* (Hannover, NH, 1982); Léon Poliakov, *Le mythe aryen* (Paris, 1971), pp. 236–37 (trans. by Edmund Howard, *The Aryan Myth* (London, 1974)).

⁹ Wolfram, 'Origo et religio', p. 36: 'As for Goffart's argument that his "Narrators" are authors of politically situated and programmatic literature, this is no different from every other text that was ever written.' Because 'political situation' is common to all texts, we do not have to take any account of it — so it would appear — and are free to move on to something else.

medieval Scandinavia illuminate the Migration Age, we are put in mind of an 'invention of tradition', rather than normal history.¹⁰

What contact did Migration Age Germans have with the distant past? Sources, especially truly contemporary ones, are sparse, but do not leave us entirely uninformed.

Memory mechanisms were very imperfect. The great Germanic exploits documented by Graeco-Roman texts left no trace in *barbaricum*. The victorious destruction of three Roman legions by Arminius is a salient example; so is the ten-year war of a Germanic coalition against the imperial forces of Marcus Aurelius, or the earlier, tragic adventure of the Cimbri and Teutones. Modern Germans have glorified Arminius, celebrating him as a shining hero. There is no hint that ancient Germans remembered him.¹¹

In a battle scene related by Ammianus, Goths warm themselves for action by singing the praise of their ancestors — an oral hall of fame.¹² Did these chants favour old heroes over new ones? Experience suggests that, sooner or later, newer heroes displaced more distant ones, who drifted into oblivion. This mechanism of forgetfulness was not peculiarly Germanic; the displacement of old heroes by new is as normal today as in the past.¹³

The Franks and Alamanni had salient roles in Late Antiquity; neither of them knew their past. Roman sources tell us some of their activities from the third century onward. Frankish memories in the 500s did not reach anywhere near the 200s and 300s. Gregory of Tours reports casually that the Franks came from Pannonia and settled at the Rhine. This migration is nonsense, but Gregory's report fits into a pattern. Bede states that the earliest Britons came from Armorica — Brittany to us.¹⁴ A principle is built into both reports: the place that you go to in the present is where you are said to have come from in the past. British emigration to Armorica, completing the circle, was a fact of current or recent history to Bede. Gregory's reference to the Franks coming from Pannonia is an interesting indication of the eastern reach of the Franks in the sixth century; we know

¹⁰ Wolfram, '*Origo et religio*', pp. 21–22; the 'theory' based on Scandinavian mythology is followed by an explication of the Lombard origin story (seventh century). Much is heard again of (medieval) Scandinavia in connection with the Goths (pp. 28–34).

¹¹ *OCD*, 1st edn, p. 100, s.v. 'Arminius': 'Only the Roman, not the German tradition, preserved his memory' (Momigliano; later editions omit this sentence).

¹² Amm. Marc. XXXI 7.11: as the armies face each other, the Romans raise their war cry in unison: 'Barbari vero maiorum laudes clamoribus stridebant inconditis' ('But the barbarians sounded the glories of their forefathers with wild shouts'). Amidst this noise, skirmishes begin (trans. by John C. Rolfe, LCL, 3 vols (Cambridge, MA, 1935–58), III, 430–33).

¹³ A learned friend tells me that major Hindu gods come in twelves, but are not always identical; in the course of several centuries, one god drops out and is replaced by a new favourite. Concerning recent heroes, part of contemporary history, a characteristic example of change might be Franklin Delano Roosevelt: his fame has greatly dimmed today by comparison to what it was in my school days.

¹⁴ Gregory of Tours, *Hist.*, II 9, 'Tradunt enim multi, eosdem de Pannonia fuisse digressos'; Bede, *HE*, I 1.

that they were active in the southeastern reaches of their territory. Gregory's story (like Bede's) is nonsense about the past but interesting documentation for his own time.¹⁵

From about AD 180 to the early 400s, the Vandals were settled in the middle Danube valley. Their history in Latin sources is coherent though discontinuous from the second century to the end of their kingdom in Africa. Christian Courtois thought he could not write about Vandals in Africa 'while wholly abstracting from their [earlier history]'.¹⁶ Courtois's decision did not concern the Vandals; it was an act of piety towards modern scholarship. Over a long span, a string of energetic, resourceful, and voluble scholars pieced together what they believed were the activities of the Vandals before the second century AD. Out of scraps of Tacitus, Pliny, and Ptolemy, mixed with abusively interpreted archaeology, reasons were found for giving the Vandals Scandinavian origins and a long Polish sojourn.¹⁷ The Vandals even have an alternative legend: an English *Atlas of the Roman World* shows them on an uninterrupted track from the shores of the Sea of Azov to those of Africa. This fanciful migration story (whose initial stages do not overlap with its rival) is based on the much admired and wholly mistaken Byzantine historian Procopius.¹⁸

¹⁵ Æneas, in flight from Troy and headed for Italy, was guided by an ancestral memory that Italy had been the homeland from which the original Trojans had come. About Franks in the East: Zöllner, *Geschichte der Franken*, pp. 93–94; Heinz Löwe 'Das Zeitalter der Merowinger', in *Handbuch der deutschen Geschichte*, ed. by Bruno Gebhardt, 9th edn (Stuttgart, 1970), I, 115–16, 139–40; Roger Collins, 'Theodebert I, "Rex magnus Francorum"', in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society*, ed. by Patrick Wormald, Donald Bullough, and Roger Collins (Oxford, 1983), pp. 7–33 (pp. 9–11). About British migration in Bede, see J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History: A Historical Commentary* (Oxford, 1988), p. 8.

¹⁶ Christian Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique* (Paris, 1955), p. 11.

¹⁷ Jes Martens, 'The Vandals: Myth and Facts about a Germanic Tribe of the First Half of the 1st Millennium AD', in Shennan (ed.), *Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity*, pp. 57–65, sensibly distinguishes the 'historical' Vandals, first encountered in the Marcomannic War, from the 'archaeological' ones, over whom much indecisive ink has flowed. Courtois, *Vandales*, pp. 11–21 (good critical sense undermined by a craving to provide the Vandals with a prehistory). Émilienne Demougeot, *La formation de l'Europe et les invasions barbares*, 2 vols in 3 (Paris, 1969–79), I, 46–47, 212–15, illustrates traditional writing about the 'archaeological Vandals'.

As Courtois reminds us, there are no Vandal 'native traditions' about a distant past; the parts Vandals play in Gothic and Lombard tales are not of their choosing. Tacitus and Pliny considered the name Vandil generic, like Suevi — a group name that supplemented individual tribe names; 'le nom d'un groupe de peuples confusément situés à l'est des Suèves' (Demougeot, *Formation de l'Europe*, I, 214). Reports about the location of Vandils are from within the Roman world and give no details. The belief in an original Vandal home in Scandinavia (northern Jutland) is of modern, erudite origin.

¹⁸ Tim Cornell and John Matthews, *Atlas of the Roman World* (New York, 1982), p. 209. For the source, Proc., *Wars*, III 3.1–2. Procopius does not dwell on the distant Vandal past. No

If we look into Jordanes, Paul the Deacon, and a few more late narratives, we find a few well-organized, single-stranded accounts of distant tribal pasts. These narratives force us to ask what is more typical and authentic, the muddled ignorance found among the Vandals and Franks and Alamanni, or the flowing stories of Jordanes for the Goths and Paul for the Lombards? For the sake of comparison, what does the muddled history half-absorbed by our lay coevals lead us to expect?

The distant past comes into its own, not among Migration Age Germans, but among the Europeans of today, including non-Germans. Two important historical notions concerning the early Germanic peoples have been current among Europeans for a long time and afflict us still: these peoples — so it is argued — proceeded from original homelands (*Urheimaten*), and they engaged in dramatic migrations. Collectivities that know their 'birthplaces' and remember their migratory adventures are extraordinarily well informed about their past. Were any in this felicitous position? A prewar anthropologist envisioned wanderings in a very universal way and denied them specificity: '“Restless movement” is the characteristic of man [. . .] it can lead only to confusion to seek points of departure and routes of migration.'¹⁹ This wise counsel, if heard at all, has gone unheeded.

The ancient Germans, and Slavs for that matter, are spoken of as though each constituent people had a single geographical origin. Maps assiduously record points of departure. The idea of an *Urheimat* is not entirely groundless. Plants — wheat, corn, oranges, whatever — have native patches, in which the wild species still grows. Human groups are different: '[they] do not allow for origins as they are always the result of prior developments.'²⁰

A typical recent statement concerning *Urheimaten* is by Hans-Joachim Diesner: 'the first question that has to be asked concerns the homeland and origin of [the Goths] who had such a decisive influence on important phases of the Great Migration.'²¹ Note, 'the first question'; that it should be first appears self-evident. Yet, historians are not duty-bound to begin at the earliest possible point; modern accounts of Rome do not start

sooner do we see them at the 'Maeotic Lake' than they've moved to the banks of the Rhine, joined with the Alans, and broken into Roman territory.

¹⁹ Arthur Maurice Hocart, *Kings and Councillors: An Essay in the Comparative Anatomy of Human Society*, ed. by Rodney Needham (Chicago, 1970), p. lvi. The passage is quoted in the editor's introduction from a book of Hocart's about Fiji posthumously published in 1952. But see now n. 32, below.

²⁰ Giorgio Ausenda in *Franks and Alamanni in the Merovingian Period: An Ethnographical Perspective*, ed. by Ian Wood, *StHistArch* 3 (Woodbridge, 1998), p. 21. I understand Ausenda as expressing a postulate now commonly accepted among anthropologists, and not voicing a personal opinion.

²¹ Hans-Joachim Diesner, *The Great Migration: The Movement of Peoples across Europe, AD 300–700*, trans. by C. S. V. Salt (London, 1982), p. 90. This is a work of popularization, but Diesner has many learned publications about this period to his credit.

at Troy and it has seemed possible to distinguish the 'historical' Vandals from their archaeological forebears. Diesner's *modus operandi* is different: any account of the Goths must absolutely originate with their *Urheimat*, no matter how fancifully determined.²² What applies to Goths applies to the others: what ranks *first* in relevance is not when a people becomes graspable in historical sources, but its *Urheimat*, painstakingly reconstructed from ill-assorted scraps of evidence by scholars often blinder than they should be to their motives.

By modern standards, the idea of an 'original home' is absurd. Even early narratives 'always speak of origins and beginnings in a manner which presupposes earlier origins and beginnings'.²³ But the single point of departure lives on. The widely circulated *Times Concise Atlas of World History* perpetuates a map showing the Pripet Marshes as the *Urheimat* of the Slavs; that vast swampy home is ringed with outward-pointing arrows marking Slavic emigration.²⁴ The silliness of this image does not keep it from being unforgettable.

Migrations are equally memorable. Honoured historians today continue to make much of a thousand-year Germanic expansion or migration. The idea of Germans assiduously migrating is not confined to Germany, as witness Émilienne Demougeot's *La formation de l'Europe*, whose coherence stems from a relentless rhetoric of migration.²⁵ Karl Bosl invokes 'the millennium of the Germanic People Migration [*Völkerwanderung*] which begins with the early Iron Age'.²⁶ Alexander Demandt, a distinguished ancient historian, declares that the *Völkerwanderung* was not set in motion by the Huns:

²² In the later 1950s, I heard Sir Ronald Syme intimate to a class that the Gallic sack of Rome was about where one might begin a Roman history. There may be alternatives to the date Syme proposed, but few would advocate beginning with Troy or even the kings.

²³ Wolfram, '*Origo et religio*', p. 25.

²⁴ 'The Barbarian Invasions, 5: The expansion of the Slavs to c. 700', in *The Times Concise Atlas of World History*, ed. by George Barraclough (London, 1982), p. 33 (extracted from the full atlas of 1978). Many earlier atlases contain maps illustrating the same origin from the Pripet Marshes.

²⁵ Demougeot, *Formation de l'Europe* (n. 17, above). There is no brief way to illustrate Demougeot's reliance on incessant migrations as an explanatory device.

²⁶ *Das alte Germanien: Die Nachricht der griechischen und römischen Schriftsteller*, ed. and trans. by Wilhelm Capelle (Jena, 1929), p. 4 (translation mine): the *Völkerwanderung* was basically the last act of the great world-historical drama signified by the Germanic *Völkerwanderung* (begun at least in the second century BC). Karl Bosl, 'Germanische Voraussetzungen für Herrschaft, Staat, Gesellschaft im Mittelalter', in *Handbuch der deutschen Geschichte*, I, 702: 'Das "Germanische" ist sprachlich und geistig ein Ergebnis des Jahrtausends des germanischen Völkerwanderung' ('Linguistically and mentally, [what we call] "German" is a result of the millennium of the Germanic Migration of Peoples'), etc. Note the similarity of idea to L. Schmidt, n. 29, below.

Rather, [the *Völkerwanderung*] is the turbulent last stage of a Germanic expansion that is visible ever since early in the first millennium BC. Proceeding from south Scandinavian/north German space, the Germans expanded in all directions. The Bastarnae already reached the Black Sea in the third century BC.²⁷

Bosl and Demandt ask us to believe that the millennial dynamism of Germanic expansion carried forward into the 'turbulent last stage' coinciding with the fall of Rome. A final illustration is supplied by a young archaeologist: 'If we do claim an identity [of the Przeworsk culture with the Vandals], however, would it then be wrong to expect that we should be able to follow them all the way through Europe to North Africa?'²⁸ It is as though barbarian studies culminate in the tracing of a line of migration over a very long distance. Demandt and Bosl foster the illusion that the distant Germanic past was ultra-special in its mobility. Ludwig Schmidt had been there before: migrations were the feature that integrated the history of the early Germanic peoples. In a dangerous modification of Schmidt's opinion, some recent historians have decided that a few *Stämme* were peculiarly migratory: the Goths and Lombards and Burgundians were *Wanderstämme*.²⁹ In reality, Germanic migrations accompanied and paralleled the expansion of their neighbours near and far; they were a branch of common migratory humanity.

The study of migration by demographers, archaeologists, economic historians, geographers, and social scientists in general has been more intensive, especially in recent years, than historians of the barbarians may realize. The attempts to define 'migration' vary from scholar to scholar with partial overlaps. Definitions bring under the umbrella of 'migration' such diverse activities as daily commuting to work, leaving the agrarian countryside to settle in cities, and uprooting whole peoples and leading

²⁷ Alexander Demandt, *Der Fall Roms: Die Auflösung des römischen Reiches im Urteil die Nachwelt* (Munich, 1984), pp. 588–89 (translation mine): 'Die sogenannte Völkerwanderung war kein unvermittelt, etwa erst durch den Hunnensturm ausgelöstes Ereignis. Vielmehr ist sie das turbulente Endstadium einer germanischen Ausdehnung, die sich seit dem frühen ersten Jahrtausend v. Chr. nachweisen lässt. Ausgehend vom südsandinavisch-norddeutschen Raum breiteten sich die Germanen nach allen Himmelsrichtungen aus. Bereits im dritten Jahrhundert v. Chr. erreichten die Bastarnen das Schwarze Meer.' It's astonishing that a scholar of Demandt's specialization and detachment from *germanische Altertumskunde* should speak just like Bosl. Particularly worth pondering is his reference to the Bastarnae being *already* at the lower Danube in the third century BC. In relation to what were they premature?

²⁸ Martens, 'The Vandals: Myth and Facts', p. 63.

²⁹ Ludwig Schmidt, 'Die Ursachen der Völkerwanderung', *Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum, Geschichte und deutsche Literatur*, 11 (1903), 340. The transformation of certain peoples into 'Migratory Tribes' par excellence is recorded by Bowlus, 'Ethnogenesis Models', pp. 152, 154. It is not a coincidence that the chosen wanderers have their migrations narrated in early medieval Latin histories.

them to a new land, promised or not.³⁰ One scholar has even proposed that 'the [social] revolutions of modern history [are] often a kind of space-unchanging *Völkerwanderung* "from the bottom up"'.³¹ Students of migrations are not exclusively, or even predominantly, concerned with 'migration' as a collective social phenomenon, of the same order as 'war'. They have applied much effort to probing particular movements, their causes and effects.

The most important contribution of these studies to the late Roman period is the social scientists' awareness that migration is ubiquitous: 'our understanding of history and prehistory alters dramatically with the realization that its actors were not sedentary. Migration is not an exception, but a constant.'³² This comment was made less than a decade ago. It suggests that social scientists concerned with migration address an audience not yet conscious of the extraordinary prevalence of movement in the past and present. Historians have the same problem.³³

All peoples move, invade, expand, contract. Such activities are the stuff of history. During the 1500 years evoked by Bosl and Demandt, the Germans shared the world more or less turbulently with Phoenicians, Greeks, Celts, Scythians, Thracians, and not least Romans, some of whom asserted themselves more emphatically than others, at least for a time. The term *Völkerwanderung* isolates a particular group — the *Germanen* — whose existence has been clearer to moderns than it was to themselves; and it mixes and homogenizes movements that had particular circumstances, local reasons, and human leaders, and took place simultaneously with similarly deliberate stirrings by non-Germans. Certainly, people moved; action generally involves motion. What matters, however, is not the incidental circumstance of changing places, but the broader occurrences that were going on.

³⁰ Chapman and Hamerow (eds), *Migrations and Invasions*, especially the contributions of Chapman and Hamerow, 'Introduction: On the Move Again — Migrations and Invasions in Archaeological Explanation', pp. 1–10, and David Anthony, 'Prehistoric Migration as Social Process', pp. 21–32. I'm grateful to my colleague, Alexander Murray, for drawing my attention to this collection.

³¹ Hans Hochholzer, 'Typologie und Dynamik der Völkerwanderungen', *Die Welt als Geschichte*, 19 (1959), 129–45 (p. 144).

³² Anthony, 'Prehistoric Migration', p. 29, citing Leslie Page Moch, *Moving Europeans: Migration in Western Europe since 1650* (Bloomington, 1992). *Migration, Migration History, History: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives*, ed. by Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen, *International and Comparative Social History*, 4 (Bern, 1997), p. 31: migrations are continuous phenomena embedded in the social and economic framework of human organizations (this paraphrase combines the views of several authorities, including Moch).

³³ Chapman and Hamerow, 'Introduction: On the Move Again', p. 1: 'There can be little doubt that, at the scale of the *longue durée*, migration and invasion are two important processes with potential explanatory status.' The oddity in this comment is the appeal to the *longue durée*, since migration and invasion pertain just as much to the *courte durée* as to the *longue*.

A recent improvement in early Germanic studies, as we shall see,³⁴ is the recognition that tribes can no longer be imagined marching for centuries at a time in ordered ranks with homogeneous ethnic compositions, from (say) the shores of the Baltic, across Europe, over the Roman border, and to a settlement on Roman soil. The common, track-filled map of the *Völkerwanderung* may illustrate such courses of events, but it misleads.³⁵ Unfolded over long periods of time, the changes of position that took place were necessarily irregular — periods of energy alternating with longer periods of respite and, for the collectivities in question, times of disintegration and detachment from ancestral traditions; in other words, periods of emphatic discontinuity. Discussions of *Traditionskerne* generally focus on moments when fragmented peoples were joined together and inspired to common action. The tale could not have constantly taken this form. For decades and possibly centuries the tradition bearers idled, and the tradition itself hibernated. There was ample time for forgetfulness to do its work.

The pre-eminence given in historical literature to migration by non-Romans in Late Antiquity has the severe and damaging consequence of making us forget that on the eve of the Great Migration many, perhaps all, Germanic peoples were at rest. The invasions endured by the Roman empire in the fifth century were carried out by neighbours who had been rooted to the soil they occupied for as long as they could remember; they were permanent residents, not transients in search of new homes. In the succinct words of Susan Reynolds, 'we have very little evidence at all, outside the stories that were told and elaborated after the sixth century, that a larger proportion of the population of Europe moved around during the "Age of Migration" than at any other time.'³⁶ These conditions are not disputed so much as overshadowed. To name a few cases, the Marcommani and Quadi occupied the same space in the Danube valley that they had before the Romans expanded and became their neighbours. The stability of the lower Rhine peoples was much the same. The Vandals, also Danubians, had, for all practical purposes, never moved before they invaded Gaul in the early 400s. Even if the early Vandal progression alleged by scholars took place, it lay so far in the past as to be wholly forgotten when the Vandals joined the Alans and Sueves to invade Gaul.

The Germans of the great invasions did not have the momentum of long wandering behind them. Goths, Vandals, Franks, Saxons were detached by 150 or more years from any conceivable migration in their past. When they moved it was as uprooted sedentaries.

³⁴ N. 38, below.

³⁵ Walter Goffart, 'What's Wrong with the Map of the Barbarian Invasions?', in *Minorities and Barbarians in Medieval Life and Thought*, ed. by Susan J. Ridyard and Robert G. Benson, Sewanee Medieval Studies, 7 (Sewanee, 1996), pp. 139–77. I realized some years after this article that the fundamental fault of this map is that it portrayed the Germans exclusively as migrants.

³⁶ Reynolds, 'Medieval *Origines gentium*', p. 379. My comment applies until the start of the 400s. In the fifth century, the Huns occasioned major shifts in population, perhaps of the sort that has been classed as 'coerced migrations': Anthony, 'Prehistoric Migration', p. 27, reporting a classification by Charles Tilley.

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In my generation, Herwig Wolfram has been the most learned, eloquent, and prolific spokesman about early Germans, notably the Goths. He refers to his critics as though they were persecutors: 'Anyone in the field of Gothic history must expect to be misunderstood, rejected, and stigmatised.'³⁷ Victimized though he may be, Wolfram has garnered thunderous applause; he is a very prominent historian.

Concerning the early Germans, he has been a disciple of Reinhard Wenskus, whose *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* (1961) discredited the idea that Germanic tribes moved as coherent entities from original homes to the Roman frontier. Wenskus also developed an explanation of how tribes perpetuated their identity over long periods of time: fragmented peoples successively re-formed as tribes under the inspiration and leadership of *Traditionskerne* — families, preferably descended from gods, which sustained collective traditions over many centuries. It seems axiomatic, thanks probably to genealogies, that families cultivated traditions even if peoples did not. The idea that gaps in continuity were repeatedly sealed by the activity of 'nuclei' gives particular importance to 'ethnogenesis' — the moment of tribal regeneration.³⁸

Wenskus's long book puts one in mind of the phrase 'reculer pour mieux sauter'. His withdrawal from an endangered salient led to a preferable theory of tribal development, and it rescued the discipline of Germanic antiquity, *germanische Altertumskunde*, which risked total discredit after the *Zusammenbruch* of 1945. The old continuous *Stämme* were plowed under and superseded by re-formed ones looking much like the ones they replaced.³⁹

³⁷ Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, p. 1 (first sentence of the introduction). Much the same in Herwig Wolfram, *Treasures on the Danube: Barbarian Invaders and Their Roman Inheritance*, ed. by G. Langthaler (Vienna, 1985), p. 54: 'Whoever deals with the history of early medieval gentes must even today be prepared to be misunderstood, falsely praised, or rejected.'

³⁸ Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* (1961); the 2nd edn of 1977 is a reprint. For an introduction to the theme, see n. 1, above. 'Ethnogenesis' is more often mentioned than precisely defined. See *Franks and Alamanni in the Merovingian Period*, ed. by Wood, p. 21 [G. Ausenda]: 'I have a problem with the term "ethnogenesis" because both parts of the compound are controversial. [...] [Inter alia] ethnogenesis gives the wrong impression that, once arrived at the discovery of the "ethnic" mixture [...], this remained essentially stable.' Ibid., p. 28 [Wood replying to Ausenda]: 'People have different views of what ethnogenesis is. But having said that, I think the development of studies of ethnogenesis, meaning studies of literary sources to see how stories of origin are developed[,] is actually a very, very useful area of study. And if you don't have a term like ethnogenesis you are going to have to come up with some other one. So, I'm not terribly happy with [Ausenda's] rejection of the term.' Ausenda seems to me to have the better of this exchange.

³⁹ On Wenskus's rescue of *Altertumskunde* by the application of ethnosociology, see Herwig Wolfram, *Geschichte der Goten*, 2nd edn (Munich, 1980), p. 3; cf. idem, *Die Goten*, 3rd edn, p. 22. For a sample of what happened to the *Stämme*, see Veit, 'Ethnic Concepts in German Prehistory', p. 48.

Wolfram adapts Wenskus's practice of pulling back and then leaping forward; his special twist is that he 'disclaims and retains'. In one instance, he approves of sharply restricting the authority of Caesar and Tacitus as sources of German constitutional history, then in the next lines he recovers the lost ground and restores Caesar and Tacitus to their habitual role.⁴⁰ Wolfram deprecates the historian Jordanes and refers to him rarely, but he retains the contents of the *Getica* and draws on it incessantly under the alias of an '*Origo Gothica*' or Cassiodorus's Gothic history.⁴¹ No one has seen the two works just mentioned; neither physically exists. In their names, Jordanes's narrative, which alone survives, can be exploited without regard for the critical restrictions that hem in the *Getica*.⁴² Two scholars harmed by Nazism are warmly praised; their ideas are then passed over as tainted by their political sufferings.⁴³ Wolfram's goal is never to argue with contrary opinions: the opposition is praised, accepted, deplored, or otherwise acknowledged, but denied the compliment of being taken seriously. After a few lines, the alien intrusion vanishes, and Wolfram returns unbowed to his own discourse.

An emphatic act of faith underlies these procedures. Wolfram contrasts himself to the 'positivists' — once a term of praise — who, he claims, are horrified by the biased historical writing of the 'compilers' of *origines gentium*; like him, everyone should accept that 'there exists an ethnic memory which can reach back over many generations. It includes genuine onomastic material and recounts theogony and ethnogenetic processes about which we would lack all other evidence.'⁴⁴ Wolfram takes it as a premise not needing proof that many generations of ethnic memory heartened the Germanic peoples.

⁴⁰ Herwig Wolfram, 'Gothische Studien I,' *MIÖG*, 83 (1975), 1–32 (p. 23).

⁴¹ The index to Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, lists nine references to Jordanes in the text vs. thirty to *Origo Gothica*. References to Cassiodorus's Gothic history are not segregated in the consolidated Cassiodorus index entry.

⁴² I first saw '*Origo Gothica*' in Herwig Wolfram, 'Gothische Studien II,' *MIÖG*, 83 (1975), 289–324 (pp. 304, 307, etc.). The name is not in the public domain, I believe, or in other modern accounts of the Goths. Wolfram creates new technical terms out of words that do not lend themselves to such manipulation. He glosses 'a tribal tradition' as *memoria*, as though the Latin word had ever had this narrow meaning: '*Origo et religio*', p. 32. Similarly, he claims that, when a Latin author wrote of a barbarian people, he customarily called it *gens* or *natio*; however true this is, what matters is that the same nouns were used for non-barbarians, too (Armenian, Persian, Roman, etc.): Wolfram, *Das Reich und die Germanen: Zwischen Antike und Mittelalter*, Siedler Deutsche Geschichte, 1 (Berlin, 1990), p. 52 (= idem, *The Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*, trans. by Thomas Dunlap (Berkeley, 1997), pp. 22–26).

⁴³ Wolfram, *Das Reich und die Germanen*, p. 289 (= *Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*, p. 204); '*Origo et religio*', p. 25.

⁴⁴ Wolfram, *Treasures on the Danube*, p. 42. See also Wolfram '*Origo et religio*', p. 25; Herwig Wolfram, 'Einleitung oder Überlegungen zur Origo Gentis', in *Typen der Ethnogenese*, I, 19–31 (p. 27).

A long quotation from Wolfram's *History of the Goths* shows the distant past impinging on the post-Wenskus Goths:

why [do we] not believe [the Ostrogothic king] Theodoric and accept his claim [that his family had originated in Scandinavia and had made the long trek from there to the Black Sea] — of course not as hard fact but as motif of a saga [. . .] ? [After the myriad vicissitudes of five hundred years], formations of Gothic tribes were possible only because they were based on this saga, which was kept alive by 'nuclei of tradition' like the Amal clan. It was these nuclei who preserved the Gothic name. We should therefore take seriously, if not as hard fact, at least as a motif, the saga (*memoria*) of the Amali, which forms the background of their achievements [. . .] the question is not whether Scandinavia was the 'original homeland of the Goths'; at best [i.e. at the least] it is whether certain Gothic clans came from the north across the Baltic Sea to the Continent.

The Amal genealogy gives an answer.⁴⁵

'[O]f course not as hard fact': Amal origins in Scandinavia are said to be a saga motif, whatever that might be; hard fact is denied. But the lost ground is quickly won back: the coming of some Gothic clans from the north *is* hard fact to Wolfram⁴⁶ (similarly, Scandinavia is said not to have exported masses of people, as Jordanes alleges, but to have most definitely exported 'sacred traditions'⁴⁷); the crossing of the Baltic to the continent by these clans is hard fact; so is their trek to the Black Sea. And the granite-firm fact is that these clans, notably the Amals, kept alive the name and saga of the Goths — the 'gentile *Memoria*'⁴⁸ — and, by means of it, convinced tens of thousands of heterogeneous odds and sods to adopt the name of Goths as their own and to bear it to glory.

According to Wolfram, Gothic clans such as the Amals conveyed a unique, consecrated tale, reaching back like a river to the Scandinavian wellspring; Amal or not, a tribal saga was transmitted orally and, for this reason, subject to transformation. That saga was sustained — coherent, developing, consecutive — for close to a half

⁴⁵ Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, pp. 36–37.

⁴⁶ The end of the extract includes a good illustration of Wolfram's 'disclaiming and retaining': after stressing that a Scandinavian *Urheimat* was irrelevant, he states firmly that some clans migrated from there, 'there' being the reincarnation of a slightly mitigated *Urheimat*, since a few clans would surely be no worse as inhabitants of an *Urheimat* than a populous nation.

⁴⁷ Wolfram, '*Origo et religio*', p. 34. Jordanes's allegation about the export of people (*vagina gentium*) at least exists; there is no evidence at all for the export of 'sacred traditions'. The sacred Scandinavian traditions known to us are medieval.

⁴⁸ This expression, which Wolfram's readers often encounter, occurs, e.g., in his 'Typen der Ethnogenese', pp. 610, 611, 614, and often in his other writings. The portentous Latin name gives a veneer of universality to a personal coinage.

millennium: 'This continuity is presumably due to isolation. Relatively stable societies can maintain ancient traditions.'⁴⁹ Another arresting claim is that Theoderic personally 'insisted that his family originated in Scandinavia'. Cassiodorus wrote a Gothic history (long lost) at Theoderic's behest; this fact spurs Wolfram to the daring inflation that Theoderic personally dictated the Gothic past to Cassiodorus.⁵⁰ Assisted by this liberty, the Goths of Late Antiquity are furnished with a truly distant past that, Wolfram claims, explains their triumphs and achievements.

Wolfram is faithful to Wenskus in associating nuclei of tradition with origin stories — not only those of Jordanes and Paul the Deacon, but also later narratives down to Widukind in the tenth century, and farther still. Wolfram insists that normal source criticism is irrelevant to these texts.⁵¹ He proceeds as what he calls an 'exegetic historian', skilled in explicating 'mysterious and inscrutable evidence'.⁵²

One example of his exegetic history has the advantage of brevity:

Obviously, those [Saxons] who were victorious possessed better and more effective institutions, better means of warfare and military organization. In the language of myth, this means that they possessed better gods who ennobled them, that is, who helped them overcome their small numbers. This is exactly what the seemingly paradoxical sentence *Langobardos paucitas nobilitat* means.⁵³

Wolfram begins the extract as an up-to-date historian adept at analysing the workings of societies; he then turns into an exegete licensed to unravel myth, including an ostensibly 'paradoxical' sentence. But to whom does the puzzling sentence belong? Our exegete treats it as though it proceeded from within the society being 'ennobled'. That is not the case; Tacitus, a Roman, is speaking *a parte sua*. He comments that the

⁴⁹ Wolfram, '*Origo et religio*', pp. 26, 33. He refers to Scandinavia but does not explain how Goths managed to be as placidly stable as backwoods Scandinavian villages.

⁵⁰ Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, p. 324. This metamorphosis of Theoderic into the 'teller of the tribal saga' is proper to Wolfram alone, as far as I know. The many modern biographers of Theoderic or historians of the Ostrogoths do not give Theoderic this undocumented role.

⁵¹ From the typescript of a lecture at the University of Utrecht, 28 Sept. 1998: 'Only the Germanic peoples of type II [such as the Goths] have non-classical *origines gentium*, histories of tribal origin. And it doesn't make much difference that this literature only comes into being in the middle of the sixth century and mostly derives [i.e. descends] from the eighth or ninth, tenth, even of the twelfth centuries' (= idem, 'Typen der Ethnogenese', p. 617). The context is a four part typology of Germanic peoples (see n. 62, below). One is left to wonder why the date of this literature does not make much difference. Also influential in turning attention toward origin narratives is Karl Hauck, 'Lebensnormen und Kultmythen in germanischen Stammes- und Herrschergenealogien', *Saeculum*, 6 (1955), 211–21.

⁵² Wolfram, '*Origo et religio*', p. 37.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 35–36.

Lombards are few and surpass themselves in martial valour — they ennoble themselves — so as to ward off their much more numerous neighbours. There is no paradox or need for exegesis; Tacitus's meaning is straightforward and unmythical. His calm political comment is similar to Wolfram's opening reference to better institutions.⁵⁴

Wolfram, who often repeats these same words of the *Germania*, invariably treats *paucitas nobilitat* as though it were a Germanic idea, rather than a fragment of Tacitean eloquence. He does the same even more forcefully with Tacitus's reference to *vera et antiqua nomina*. The transformation of Tacitean phrases into particles of Germanic wisdom are one dimension of Wolfram's method as an 'exegetic historian'.⁵⁵

Wolfram casts off the normal rules. Simple verification is the common ground among scholars. Wolfram's discourse is often beyond verification. 'In fact, there were continuous migrations of small warbands who were forced to go into exile. Groups of 200 or 300 warriors at the most left home due to internal strifes and feuds': the words are spoken confidently, with precise numbers of emigrants and the authenticating phrases 'in fact' and 'at the most'; but Wolfram knows as little as everyone else about warrior departures.⁵⁶ 'One of Woden's many divine names was "Longbeard"': fair enough, but this is not general knowledge. Wolfram needs to share with us how he knows this.⁵⁷ Certain names (such as 'Goth') 'mark their bearers as reborn divine ancestors'; Wolfram affirms this often, but without disclosing what makes it true. With only the word 'witches' in hand, he spins imaginary stories of tension among early Goths and expects them to be believed.⁵⁸ The situation does not always improve when verification is possible, such as with the seventeen Alban and Gothic kings. Their alleged parallelism proves wrong when checked. Wolfram's argument needs a canonical number, familiar to educated men: it does not exist; the number of Alban kings varies from one author to the next.⁵⁹ As for the 'genre' of *origo gentis*, of great importance to

⁵⁴ Tacitus, *Germania* 40: 'Contra [i.e., in contrast to the aforementioned very populous Semnones] Langobardos paucitas nobilitat: plurimis ac valentissimis nationibus cincti non per obsequium, sed proeliis ac periclitando tuti sunt.' The good political commentator sets out the alternative: submission or fierce fighting. Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, p. 75, connects the Tacitean phrase to incidents in the Lombard origin legends of the seventh and eighth centuries.

⁵⁵ Wolfram, '*Origo et religio*', p. 34.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 27.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 22.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 35; idem, 'Einleitung oder Überlegungen', p. 28. Cf. Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, p. 242 n. 656 (based on O. Höfler). The witches: Wolfram, '*Origo et religio*', pp. 23–24, 30–31; idem, 'Gotische Studien III', *MIÖG*, 84 (1976), 239–61 (pp. 255–57). I discuss the witches at greater length in Goffart, 'Germanic Antiquity Today', pp. 25–27.

⁵⁹ Wolfram, '*Origo et religio*', p. 31. More by Wolfram on this subject: *Intitulatio*, pp. 98–103 (Wolfram's fullest exploration); idem, 'Einige Überlegungen zur gotischen *Origo gentis*', in *Studia linguistica Alexandro Vasili filio Issatchenko*, ed. by Heinrich Birnbaum and others

Wolfram's theme, it is a tissue of misunderstanding and distortion; the 'genre' evaporates when severely verified. There are histories of Goths and Lombards and many others; but there is no consecrated 'genre', ancient or medieval, of the kind fundamental to Wolfram's argument.⁶⁰

Reinhard Wenskus points out that the names of some small tribes recorded by Roman ethnography as being in the north and east seem to pass with remarkable continuity to large, well-known migration-age tribes, such as the Goths, Vandals, and Burgundians.⁶¹ This is Wolfram's springboard to a 'core-of-tradition system', seen lately as Type II of his four-part typology of Germanic antiquity; it has a variety of other forms in earlier publications.⁶² In this system (abbreviated here), first Tacitus and the other Roman observers, then such origin legends as there are, and finally the heroic poetry of later times link smoothly to one another. Sagas rather than historical fact may be involved, but who can say? I's are best left undotted. The *Stämme*, small to start with, come uniformly from Scandinavia, are led by kings, have tribe names 'that designate the bearers as reborn divine tribal fathers', have origin legends whose storylines closely resemble each other, and — the resounding climax — establish beyond a doubt that the early Germans were attached to the *Deutschen* of at least the tenth-century Ottonian state if not by blood then surely by tradition.⁶³ The vision of an unbroken, millennial, tradition-rich development of the Germanic/German peoples is conjured up. Some postwar German historians have emphasized that the medieval and modern *Deutsche* are not lineal descendants of the *Germanen*. Wolfram is aware of the gap between ancient and modern Germans, but he has it both ways; he welcomes us back to 'a vision oriented to the idea of continuity and thus impervious to any chronological limitations'.⁶⁴ The clock turns back to German history à la Wilhelm II.

(Lund, 1978), pp. 487–99 (p. 492); idem, *History of the Goths*, p. 324 with n. 451; idem, *Treasures on the Danube*, p. 42; idem, *Das Reich und die Germanen*, p. 290 (= *Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*, p. 205). A full airing of the problems is given by Ludwig Holzapfel, *Römische Chronologie* (Leipzig, 1885), pp. 259–80. For lists comparing the reckonings of Livy, Ovid, and Dionysius, see William Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, 3 vols (London, 1844–49; repr. New York, 1967), III, 927, s.v. 'Silvius'. Sixteen is the highest figure that anyone matching Alban and Amal kings could have had in mind.

⁶⁰ There is a long, documented argument in Goffart, 'Germanic Antiquity Today', pp. 22–24.

⁶¹ Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, p. 49. Is he right about tribes being originally small? In Graeco-Roman texts, Vandil, Sueve, Frank, Saxon, Goth are virtually generic denominations, borne by groups of tribes with proper names of their own. E.g., the tribe groups called 'Vandil' in Pliny and 'Suevi' in Tacitus seem very large. One might judge that, by comparison with these early group names, the Vandals, Sueves, etc. of the Migration Age were small.

⁶² Wolfram, 'Typen der Ethnogenese', pp. 608–27.

⁶³ Wolfram, 'Einleitung oder Überlegungen', p. 28.

⁶⁴ For a gap between *Germanen* and *Deutsche*, see Heinz Löwe, 'Der erste Versuch einer römisch-germanischen Synthese in den ostgermanischen Reichen', in *Handbuch der deutschen*

Appealing to 'motifs', myths, and other mysteries, Wolfram likes to take 'mere' literature (to which he claims I have reduced the writings in question here) and contrast it to the mystic 'gentile *Memoria*', *origines gentium*, or whatever other texts exegetical historians ply: 'Mere *ad hoc* inventions, that is, literature without traditional elements and material[,] would not have been of great help to reach and motivate the audience that counted politically and socially.'⁶⁵ So conceived, the narratives we have were holy books of the *gens* (the *origo et religio* in one of his titles), destined for its important members so as to motivate them. The logic would be attractive if the texts we have and their possible audiences did not deprive the argument of plausibility. Jordanes, a Constantinopolitan, wrote just as the Goths of Italy were being trod under Justinian's feet (their royal dynasty, the Amals, had been toppled for more than a decade); Charlemagne conquered the Lombard kingdom a quarter century before the Lombard history of Paul the Deacon saw the light in the periphery of Italy. Wolfram balks at giving these little facts their due. Restored to their harsh historical contexts, the narratives of Jordanes and Paul were better suited to be nostalgic inventions of tradition than honoured reservoirs of tribal continuity.

In our modern experience, the magnets that weld collectivities together tend to be symbolic, not elaborately narrative. We have only to think of 'Old Glory', the 'Marseillaise', religious ceremonial, and royal dynasties with some claim or other to pre-eminence. Even the organized histories of recent countries are remembered by ordinary citizens as discontinuous fragments of triumph or tragedy; Napoleon comes easily to mind, while Napoleon III is hidden away. Wolfram's 'nuclei of tradition' in narrative form are sometimes entertaining; but they are mainly difficult, cumbersome literature, not captivating slogans. Only in an ivory tower can it seem possible for such writings to build communities.

The distant past impinged very little on the early Germans. What is most memorable about hoary Germanic antiquity is that scholars in our present, and in that of our forebears, have continuously striven to mobilize it for purposes that — I must admit — are increasingly difficult for me to understand.

Geschichte, I, 92. The quotation is from Klaus von See, *Kontinuitätstheorie und Sakraltheorie in der Germanenforschung: Antwort an Otto Höfler* (Frankfurt am Main, 1972), p. 8.

Another appropriate illustration of Wolfram's 'disclaim and retain' practice occurs in *Das Reich und die Germanen*, p. 38: 'Die Deutschen haben ebenso eine germanische Geschichte wie Skandinavien, Briten und Iren [...] Türken oder — Tunesier und Malteken. Bis heute motivieren sich Deutsche aus der Geschichte der Germanen oder werden von Nichtdeutschen mit dieser Geschichte verbunden. Die historische Faktizität besteht jedoch nirgends und niemals aus bloßen Daten, sondern schließt stets die Motive ein. Auch aus diesen Gründen steht die Geschichte der Germanen am Beginn einer Geschichte der Deutschen. [...] es dient der Erinnerung an den Beginn einer Geschichte der Deutschen, obwohl es in den Zeiten, da unsere Geschichte beginnt, noch lange kein Deutschen gab' (= *Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*, pp. 12–13). The line about the nature of history is so vague and sweeping that it might justify any course of action.

⁶⁵ Wolfram, '*Origo et religio*', p. 38.

Reinhard Wenskus on 'Ethnogenesis', Ethnicity, and the Origin of the Franks

ALEXANDER CALLANDER MURRAY

I

In a recent book called *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, Walter Pohl attempts to lay out future lines of inquiry in the study of what he calls 'ethnic rule' in the kingdoms of the early Middle Ages.¹ Pohl's analysis of the problem relies in part on notions derived from the instrumentalist sociology of ethnicity, which locates the meaning of human behaviour in self-interest, status, and power.² The juxtaposition of two apparently incidental elements of his exposition seem to me worth commenting on. The first concerns Pohl's acknowledgment of the literature defining the subject. Those who have followed the discussion of ethnogenesis theory over the last decade or two may be surprised at the much diminished role now accorded Reinhard Wenskus. His renowned monograph, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung: Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen gentes*,³ receives only grudging and limited acknowledgment buried in a note.⁴ On the other hand, in the text there appears

¹ *Strategies of Distinction*. Pohl's ideas are expressed in the programmatic 'Introduction: Strategies of Distinction', and in 'Telling the Difference'. The essays by other authors that follow, notably that of Peter Heather, 'Disappearing and Reappearing Tribes', pp. 95–111, tend to steer their own course.

² For an attempt to synthesize instrumentalism with other perspectives in the sociological and anthropological literature of ethnicity, see Jones, *Archaeology of Ethnicity*.

³ Henceforth *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*. It was published in 1961.

⁴ Pohl, 'Introduction: Strategies of Distinction', p. 8 and n. 18; Wenskus continues to be cited on individual points. The subdued treatment of Wenskus's contribution to the historiography here should be compared with his prominence in Pohl, 'Conceptions of Ethnicity'; idem,

repeated deferential acknowledgment of a name new to discussions of the world of barbarians and Romans: Pierre Bourdieu, the celebrated French sociologist. Wenskus's fall from grace, if one were to judge by Pohl's comments, is to be attributed to his failure to discuss the Roman context of ethnic developments.⁵ This brings us to the second element of Pohl's exposition that I find noteworthy. In discussing hair as an ethnic marker, he deals with the well-known tale of Wodan granting victory and a new name to the Lombards when fooled into mistaking their women for men.⁶ No Roman context is detected here. The tale is interpreted according to the canon of Herwig Wolfram as an authentic Germanic myth, whose 'rich symbolism' reveals it to be a primitive record of a change of cult.⁷ In the words of Wolfram, deploying what he calls 'the language of myth', the Lombards and their womenfolk 'were prepared to give up their Vanic origins and adopt the Aesic God Woden as the leader of their warband' and 'sacrifice their entire past and cultic existence for the salvation and survival of the

'Tradition, Ethnogenese und literarische Gestaltung'; and idem, 'Gentilismus', in *RGA XI* (1998), pp. 91–101.

⁵ Wenskus is, according to Pohl, 'most successful in his refutation of traditional biological [= biological] views and presents a great number of interesting points, but still argues within the traditional model of *Germanische Stammeskunde* without discussing the Roman context' (Pohl, 'Introduction: Strategies of Distinction', p. 8 n. 18). Wenskus in fact regarded what he calls ethnic thinking as central to ancient ethnography and at a number of points does consider the Roman context for sources (the *origo*-idea, for example; *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, p. 56; cf. pp. 110–11) and institutions (cf. below, pp. 63–64). He is not particularly sympathetic to Roman influence where questions of Germanic initiative, identity, and continuity are at stake. His book however is not principally about ethnic developments in the successor kingdoms but about processes which he argues were under way long before the encounter with Rome, never mind the creation of kingdoms in the western provinces. The image of the patient, elevating efforts of Roman genius (as espoused at n. 24 below) does not really fit his views. Wenskus still lays the foundation for most of what Pohl says in *Strategies of Distinction* (as at n. 1).

⁶ The Lombard women draw their hair around their faces, making it appear as if they have beards. *Origo gentis Lang.* 1, and Paul the Deacon, *Hist. Lang.*, I 9; English trans. of both by W. D. Foulke, *History of the Lombards* (Philadelphia, 1907; repr. 1974), pp. 16–19, 315–17. A distinct but related version appears in Fredegar, *Chron.*, III 65; the passage is translated in Alexander Callander Murray, *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul: A Reader* (Peterborough, Ont., 2000), no. 85, p. 610.

⁷ Pohl, 'Telling the Difference', p. 58, with n. 201. Behind Wolfram stands Karl Hauck ('Lebensnormen und Kultmythen in germanischen Stammes- und Herrschergenealogien', *Saeculum*, 6 (1955), 186–223, and esp. 204–14), who sees so-called myth as 'legitimizing norms'. There are two premises here: the first is that the subject matter is authentic myth; the second is that it reveals the *Lebensnormen* of a *distant* period in the past. The grounds for error are therefore twofold.

tribe'.⁸ Is the language of myth appropriate for Pohl's sketch of historiography as well? Have the gods of *germanische Altertumskunde* been sacrificed in favour of the gods of French sociology? Old gods do not always quickly disappear; sometimes they are merely demoted in the official cult. *Germanische Altertumskunde*, and the ideas of nineteenth-century anthropology that support it, thus still remain common elements of exposition in Pohl's approach.⁹ But perhaps the language of myth is too primitive an explanation for the roles assigned to Bourdieu and Wenskus and conceals from us meaning which only a properly nuanced instrumentalist analysis could provide. *Strategies of Distinction*, one suspects, is at least in one sense a well-titled book.

II

The following remarks are not about a potentially new approach to the study of ethnicity, but about the prevailing one, to which the term 'ethnogenesis theory' often serves as a convenient shorthand designation. Ethnogenesis is a word commonly (but not universally) used in the social sciences; only recently has it come to be used in the study of Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages.¹⁰ The term just means the origin or rise of an *ethnos*, that is, a people or ethnic group, but inevitably it tends to be used to refer to particular theories of ethnic origins.¹¹ The currency of the term in studies of the late Roman empire is due to the influential ideas of Herwig Wolfram,¹² who portrays the

⁸ Wolfram, '*Origo et religio*', p. 22.

⁹ For example Pohl (again following Wolfram) detects in the tale of Wodan and the Lombards not only a change in cult but the passage from matriliney to patriliney. Glossing this concept, derived from late-nineteenth-century evolutionary theory, as a 'gender issue' does not conceal its origin; Pohl, 'Telling the Difference', p. 58.

¹⁰ Its prevailing association in studies of the period is caught somewhat narrowly in the remarks of Ian Wood: 'People have different views of what ethnogenesis is. But having said that, I think the development of studies of ethnogenesis, meaning studies of literary sources to see how stories of origin are developed is actually a very, very useful area of study' (*Franks and Alamanni in the Merovingian Period: An Ethnographical Perspective*, ed. by Ian Wood, *StHistArch*, 3 (Woodbridge, 1998), p. 28).

¹¹ Though I use the phrase 'ethnogenesis model' in the following pages to refer to the views of Wenskus and Wolfram, note that the term ethnogenesis can be used in the literature without particular reference to either of them: *Ethnogenese Europäischer Völker*, ed. by Wolfram Bernhard and Anneliese Kandler-Pálsson (Stuttgart, 1986), with contributions on the *Germanen* by H. Ament, W. Bernhard, and J. Ó. P. Pálsson; and Allan A. Lund, *Die ersten Germanen: Ethnizität und Ethnogenese* (Heidelberg, 1998).

¹² Wolfram's most important work, *History of the Goths* (first published in German in 1979; English edition 1988), until recently has usually been the first introduction of his ideas to English-language readers; other works are mentioned in nn. 8, 16, 18, 63. An early sign that

subject less as a field of study than as a rigid template for interpreting both the sources and events of the so-called migration period.¹³ Wolfram's views are in turn an elaboration of theories developed by Reinhard Wenskus in the monograph of 1961 just mentioned.¹⁴ My comments have a limited aim: to clarify aspects of Wenskus's paradigm of ethnic development and its implications in present studies of the subject; and to weigh it against the evidence for the origins of the Frankish kingdom of the Merovingians. This may be a good time to consider the Franks as a test case for this particular branch of ethnogenesis theory. The Franks were central to Wenskus's own historical interests and that of the historiographical tradition which shaped his views and received his ideas into the mainstream of academic discourse.¹⁵ Recent work, on the other hand, tends to suggest, for a variety of reasons, that our understanding of barbarian and early medieval history hinges in some essential fashion on the interesting, if evanescent, history of the Goths.¹⁶

Wolfram's model was to be applied more broadly outside of the Gothic context appeared almost at the same time in a monograph devoted to the Frankish kingdom by Geary, *Before France and Germany*, where a long, and seemingly pointless, excursus on Gothic Tervingi, Greuthungi, Amals and Balts, and the like (pp. 64–73) precedes a short account of ethnogenesis within the Frankish 'tribal swarm'. On the last term, see nn. 20, 75 below.

¹³ See Bowlus, 'Ethnogenesis Models'.

¹⁴ Though the word ethnogenesis is now associated with Wenskus's name, he does not apply the term to his own work (cf. Bowlus, 'Ethnogenesis Models', p. 150). The appearance of the term in *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* is rare (cf. p. 109); Wenskus was aware of its role in Soviet ethnology, where it is common (cf. among other places pp. 84–85, n. 438). Avoidance of the term (though not *Ethnos* without a suffix) was intentional.

¹⁵ See below, pp. 59–67. I use the past tense in reference to *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*. Wenskus has also written widely on Prussia. His most recent work (as far as I am aware) also concerns the Franks: 'Religion abâtardie: Materien zum Synkretismus in der vorchristlichen politischen Theologie der Franken', in *Iconologia Sacra: Mythos, Bildkunst und Dichtung in der Religions- und Sozialgeschichte. Festschrift für Karl Hauck*, ed. by Hagen Keller and Nikolaus Staubach, *Arbeiten zur Frühmittelalterlicherforschung*, 23 (Berlin, 1994), pp. 179–248. Detailed discussion of its approach to the study of paganism and political thought requires separate treatment. Pohl unwisely adapts one of its elements regarding double axes in 'Telling the Difference' (p. 36). It is about time that the story of Clovis and the ewer was mercifully laid to rest.

¹⁶ The recent number of good monographs in whole or in part about Gothic history partially accounts for this. The perceptions that accompany this output, however, are not always to be taken too seriously. A recent work informs us that the Italian Ostrogoths (489–554) are 'the barbarian group most frequently used as a template for understanding all the barbarians' (Amory, *People and Identity*, p. 6). This reflects focused reading, not the literature as a whole. Readers of Herwig Wolfram's strangely titled *The Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*, trans. by Thomas Dunlap (Berkeley, 1997) may not be aware that the German edition, *Das Reich und die Germanen: Zwischen Antike und Mittelalter*, Siedler Deutsche Geschichte, 1 (Berlin, 1990), was

The subject of ethnicity has become fraught with terminological problems. These are intrinsic to the carefree ambiguity of ancient and modern languages, which are ill suited to the clarity that academics think inherent in so important a subject. Wenskus shared the social scientist's desire to establish a consistent typological vocabulary, the philologist's impulse to authenticate it by using the language of the sources, and the Germanist's penchant for explaining the world by means of etymology.¹⁷ Unfortunately the usage of the sources rarely lends itself this purpose. Wenskus in fact admitted as much, but remained largely unfazed by the contradiction, as have those who follow him.¹⁸ Linguistic efforts of the kind pursued by Wenskus tend to produce a kind of

originally part of a series in which the Franks got their own volume. The Anglo-Saxons, surely card-carrying *Germani* and even certified occupiers of former Roman provinces, receive even less attention from Wolfram than the Franks. In Wolfram's skewed hierarchy of durability and importance, the Anglo-Saxons come in far below the Goths (see the German edition, 'Vorwort'). The change in title from the German to the English edition of this book is not explained (cf. below, n. 24).

¹⁷ Wenskus is responsible for popularizing the idea that in the sources *gens* is the technical term for the political community (equivalent to the Germanic **theutho* and Greek *ethnos*), *natio* the term for the community of descent, and *populus* for the political body; according to the sources, a *gens* is at the same time a *natio* and *populus* (*Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, pp. 46–54). This combination of ideas is what constitutes the basis for his use of the word *Stamm*, a term that, etymologically at least, implies descent. Descent is of course understood to be an ideological fiction, not a biological reality.

¹⁸ 'Die lateinische Terminologie entsprach vielfach nicht den Ansprüchen der komplizierten ethnischen Verhältnisse Germaniens' (*Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, p. 50). Falko Daim's criticism of ethnographers for employing abstract, sociological definitions of *ethnos* seems especially partial when set against his own claim that this term, following the Wenskus model (n. 17, above), is used in history and archaeology in the same sense as that found in late antique and early medieval sources (Falko Daim, 'Gedanken zum Ethnosbegriff', *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien*, 112 (1982), 58–71). Herwig Wolfram is sufficiently undeterred by the inconvenience of actual usage to continue the attack on the 'all too extensive classification' of sociology and anthropology which allegedly fails to correspond to the sources (Wolfram, 'Typen der Ethnogenese', p. 609). As far as the term *gens* is concerned, the object of his displeasure is actually not broad abstract classifications at all, but the old anthropological use of *gens* as a term for the patrilineal clan, a practice that follows exactly, and with as much justification, the method he himself employs. Wenskus had been content to point out the distinction between his own usage and that of ethnology (*Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, p. 47 n. 213, p. 85 n. 438).

Making virtue of necessity, Wolfram now typically uses the disarray of Wenskus's typology to mystify the sources. In the introduction to the recent popular account of his views, he tells us that the bewildering diversity of the language of the sources will compel him 'to make observations like the following: "a *gens* is composed of many *gentes* and is led by a royal *gens*" or "the success of a royal *gens* promotes the creation on Roman soil of an early medieval *gens* and its

academic Klingon, with its practitioners piling up their own versions of technical vocabulary that possesses only an incidental connection to historical texts.¹⁹ Nevertheless, from the perspective of discourse, the problem of clarity is real enough, and to report on Wenskus's thought means accommodating oneself to the conventions of his vocabulary, if not accepting its implication.

Wenskus inherited the generic word *Stamm* for the various kinds of groups that concerned him and he continues to use it. In the Latin word *gens*, he thought he detected a technical term — with equivalents in the Germanic languages — for ethnically conscious, political groups that are the main focus of his interest. I leave it to German speakers to decide on the suitability of the word *Stamm* for ancient and early medieval ethnic groups.²⁰ Its English language translation 'tribe' is unsuitable, however, despite its continued popularity in the literature.²¹ I would be content to limp along using the comprehensive and marvellously ambiguous term 'people' (as in the phrase 'Germanic peoples'),²² supplemented with modified forms of the words 'group' and 'category'

kingdom." The reader is forewarned that such confusing statements, which defy any reasonable definition, are in fact the subject of this book' (*Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*, p. 9). The statements perhaps illuminate how Wolfram conceptualizes the subject (sacral kingship is being assumed), but no source in fact would express itself in such an awkward manner. The semantic range of *gens* in the statements is also peculiar in view of the criticism levelled against ethnology.

¹⁹ Wolfram continues to elaborate the terminology of ethnogenesis (*lex, memoria, origo, religio*). He is not alone. Similar language is used by Karl Hauck (*origo, primus rex, primordia, usus*): see among other works Hauck, 'Lebensnormen und Kultmythen' as at n. 7.

²⁰ The use of German-language terminology is a more interesting problem than the coining of Latin terms, but beyond the scope and competence of this paper: *Stamm, Volk, and Völkerschaft* have been used in distinct, and contradictory, ways that have implications for how German, and early medieval, history is conceptualized. In his classification of the structure of group types, Wenskus also employs other terms, usually drawn from the current German literature: *Heerhaufen, Wanderlawine, Stammesschwarm*. Translations have a faintly comical ring to them, a circumstance that has not stopped their occasional employment in English-language accounts of the subject.

²¹ The problem is not its alleged pejorative connotation — in a field that holds tenaciously to the word 'barbarian' as a term of art, this consideration is unlikely to cause much concern — but its application to groups defined by kinship, especially those constituted of clans and lineages.

²² Anthony D. Smith's objections to the term seem to me weak: 'socialist and Marxist ideologies have appropriated "people" for "lower" or "working" classes; and dictionary definitions include a host of synonyms, such as commonalty, enfranchised citizens, workpeople, king's subjects, and persons belonging to a place, forming a company or class, or composing a race, community or nation, or even persons in general!' (*The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 230–31). The room for serious confusion is slight, but the lack of an adjectival form of the term is inconvenient; 'ethnic' generally serves the purpose, but only in particular contexts. I fail

where necessary, but the term 'people' perhaps presumes too much about the content of Wenskus's ideas. And so in what follows I shall employ the term *gens* (in the plural *gentes*) as a device of reportage. If occasionally the word 'tribe' breaks through, understand it in the same way as a term of the literature or as translating the German word *Stamm*.

In the *gens* of the imperial period and the successor kingdoms, Wenskus saw a group defined, not by language, culture, or law, but by political allegiance and a distinctive pattern of political thinking. No wonder, he claimed, traditional scholarly classification relying on the objective criteria of linguistic and cultural studies had failed to grasp the essential form and the historical role of the *gentes*. Only recognition of the subjective, self-conscious perceptions of ethnicity, and the political processes that lay behind them, could reveal the true character of ethnic groups and the forces of early European history. Indeed Wenskus began his study with a bold statement of historical idealism: 'Nothing better illustrates the significance of political ideas in the historical process than the destruction of the Roman empire.'²³ Roman universalism and culture, in his view, were forced to give way before the new and stronger political consciousness of the Germanic *gentes* whose patterns of thinking reached back deep into the Iron Age and beyond. Recognition of the formative power of the Roman empire and antique culture is now one of the chief modifications of Wenskus's thought, expressed by a quotation that has almost become a mantra in ethnogenesis theory: 'The Germanic world was perhaps the greatest and most enduring creation of Roman political and military genius.'²⁴ Nevertheless, there is no mistaking that Wenskus's paradigm of the force of

to see anything but faint puzzlement being achieved by Smith's use of the term *ethnie*, a French form of the Greek *ethnos*.

²³ 'Nichts kann die Bedeutung politischer Ideen im Geschichtsprozeß besser beleuchten als die Zertrümmerung des römischen Reiches. Diese Behauptung mag übertrieben erschienen; war es nicht im Gegenteil die nackte Gewalt naivunbefangener Barbarenheere, die den Raum eines sich als universale Macht verstehenden Reiches mit einem ausgeprägten Staats- und Kulturbewußtsein aufsplitterte und für die ganze Folgezeit zu einem System rivalisierender Nachfolgestaaten umgestaltete? [. . .] Es war eben mehr geschehen als nur eine Besitzergreifung von Teilen römischen Bodens. Gleichzeitig vollzug sich der Einbruch eines neuen politischen Bewußtseins in den Raum der antiken Geschichte, das dem spätrömischen Staatsdenk geradezu "entgegen-gesetzt" war. [. . .] Der "Gentilismus" der landnehmenden Stämme war als Denkform politisch stärker als das römische Reichsbewußtsein der Provinzialen'; *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, pp. 1–2. Cf. n. 57, below.

²⁴ This is the introductory sentence to Geary's *Before France and Germany* (p. vii). Its meaning is not obvious. Wolfram and Pohl, who regards it as 'brilliant', interpret it as the spirit moves them and one wonders if it has something to do with the title of Wolfram's recent book (see n. 16 above). Pohl reads it in terms of a bipolarity between civilization and the barbarians and a 'pull to the centre' ('Conceptions of Ethnicity', p. 42). The roles of creator and created in this kind of argument are of course readily reversed: did not the profile of the late empire — its armies, fortifications, generals, usurpers, emperors, politics, taxation, social policy, settlements,

Germanic political thinking and ethnic consciousness, what he called *Gentilismus*, lies at the heart of current approaches to describing state formation in the late empire and successor kingdoms. Despite efforts to downgrade his contribution to the subject and to appropriate new forms of sociological analysis, little has been changed.²⁵

If the *gens* was in the first instance a political group formed principally by political forces, it nevertheless conceived of itself, according to Wenskus, as a community of descent, a clan writ large.²⁶ This primitive ideological perspective, typical he believed of early thought, concealed the reality of the *gens*'s formation, which Wenskus derived from the union of individuals and separate, and sometimes disparate, ethnic groups brought under the common leadership of a king and his close followers. This central group of king and followers, which Wenskus called the 'nucleus of tradition' (*Traditionskern*), was the principal bearer of the consciousness of the *gens*. Tradition was the prerequisite for the *gens*'s existence and its historical continuity. The hallmarks of tradition were genealogy and origin legends, archaic sacral institutions surrounding kingship, and above all, the name of the *gens*.²⁷

and ideology — have something to do with the existence of *barbaricum*? Geary's own continuation of the statement, notable still for the echo of a providential *translatio imperii*, should perhaps be the last word on what he himself means: 'That this offspring [the Germanic world] came in time to replace its creator should not obscure the fact that it owed its very existence to Roman initiative, to the patient efforts of centuries of Roman emperors, generals, soldiers, landlords, slave traders, and simple merchants to mold the (to Roman eyes) chaos of barbarian reality into forms of political, social, and economic activity which they could understand and, perhaps, control.' A rhetorical indiscretion more than a decade old would not require comment if it were not perpetuated.

²⁵ For example Pohl, *Strategies of Distinction* (as at n. 1). The condescending tone occasionally adopted by Pohl on the question of ethnic perceptions, and some ill-informed comments, seem designed for some audience or another in the European Union, but instrumentalism is an unsteady foundation for the moral high ground on these matters. The categories of 'achievement', 'success', and 'failure' are recurrent features of Pohl's analysis of ethnic groups, and seem to me thoroughly misguided on a number of interpretative levels.

Anthony D. Smith, 'The Politics of Culture: Ethnicity and Nationalism', in *Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, ed. by Tim Ingold (London, 1994), pp. 706–33, has moderate and wise words to say on the subject of ethnicity and instrumentalism. An illuminating discussion of the concept of ethnicity, in part because it was written long before the obsession of the last generation and shows continuity of thinking on this subject, is E. K. Francis, 'The Nature of the Ethnic Group', *American Journal of Sociology*, 52 (1947), 393–400.

²⁶ *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, pp. 14–17, 33–34. He regards the *Stamm*, according to the classification of German ethnosociology, as an endogamous *Klan*.

²⁷ *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, pp. 54–82. Wenskus generally assumed a continuity in the tradition bearers. Wolfram is at his bewildering best when he attempts to obfuscate the connection between tradition and those that transmit it.

To the mere historian nothing is more troubling than the weight Wenskus places on names as the embodiment of living, historically dynamic traditions. His premise is not self-evident; indeed in numerous historical instances it is demonstrably untrue. But to Wenskus names constituted grounds in themselves for assuming the continuity of tradition. They are often the key to our understanding major elements in the ethnogenesis model. For example, the emergence of new tribal names along the Roman frontier in the third century and the existence in late imperial times of names that are thought to be first attested in the early empire in the north are the chief bases for Wenskus's influential idea that, though *gens* tradition was interrupted in the Rhineland, the north provided the source of the archaic political ideas that continued to direct the historical development of the successor kingdoms.²⁸ It is important to note that in Wenskus's model the name alone is sufficient grounds to suppose a body of tradition, endlessly repeated down through the ages. To demonstrate the preservation of Germanic ethnic traditions over the centuries even deep within Gaul, Wenskus cites the existence as late as the twelfth century of the *pagus Amavorum* and *pagus Attoariorum*, the products originally of Roman-period settlements of the *Chamavi* and *Chattuarii* near Langres.²⁹ It would seem to me in this case that to state the argument is sufficient to reject the idea that lies behind it.

The same holds true for the contention that mere philological resemblances between distinct tribal names separated widely in time and space, and even by linguistic community, reveal ancient processes of ethnic division and migration.³⁰ For instance the northern *Ambrones* and *Ombrones* are brought into distant historical association with the Italian *Umbri*, the *gens antiquissima Italiae* according to Pliny, as are the northern *Teutones* with the like-named predecessors of the Etruscans, by means of the theory that tribal divisions must have taken place in the north around the turn of the first millennium BC (that is, in Wenskus's model, before the Germanic sound shift); these divisions resulted in migration to the south, and the now-separated tribal components, still bearing the same name, in the course of time underwent separate linguistic development.³¹ When

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 429–31

²⁹ Ibid., p. 437.

³⁰ The section 'Stämme, die alter sind als das Germanentum', in *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, pp. 285–99, surveys an extensive list of candidates. Wenskus's views here are not peculiar to himself; he draws on long-standing debates among philologists. The selection of historical matches seems quite arbitrary. If the modest pretence to geographical, temporal, or linguistic logic were completely thrown to the winds, the list could be extended.

³¹ *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, pp. 292–94. The *Ambrones* and *Teutones* accompanied the *Cimbri* in their famous march south (Plutarch, *Marius*, ed. and trans. by Bernadotte Perrin, vol. ix, LCL (Cambridge, MA, 1967), pp. 11–28); this would be their second trip in Wenskus's scheme. The *Ombrones* are mentioned by Ptolemy (*Geographia*, ed. and trans. by Edward Luther Stevenson (New York, 1932; Dover repr., 1991), III 5) in the second century AD as living near the mouth of the Vistula; Wenskus is sure they originated in the Jutish-Scandinavian area. On the

readers find such connections being made across languages, they may wonder what historical significances are being implied, and they may also be inclined to consider other reasons for verbal similarities. The same method gains nothing by being applied within a linguistic group.

The confusion of philology with history continues to shape the ethnogenesis model and, following Wenskus's example, is applied even to personal names and institutional nomenclature, the examination of which is thought to unlock the secrets of continuous religious and institutional development.³² One cannot help wondering what conclusions we would confront if, in the absence of conventional historical sources, the same kind of linguistic ingenuity were applied to the ancient remnants of Gallic, Latin, and Greek nomenclature that litter the texts of the late empire and early Middle Ages. A clue to the kind of picture that might emerge can be seen in recent comments by Herwig Wolfram on the significance of titles. What distinguishes Wolfram's account of real enough, but poorly attested, Germanic terms is the inclusion of the Latin *tribunus* in the same explanatory model. He begins with etymology. The point of marshalling etymological evidence seems to be to show how ancient terms, which, he suggests, were originally applied to leaders of small kinship-based groups, maintained some kind of intimate, sacral association even after being transformed by ethnogenetic processes into larger-scale groups or units of social and military organization.³³ The account confounds alleged linguistic development with institutional development:

[T]he Latin tribal word *tribus* is complemented by the office of the *tribunus*. [. . .] To be sure, the Roman tribune did not remain a tribal chieftain, but came to occupy many offices, including even that of commander in a regiment in the army of the later Roman empire. [. . .] History could thus carry a word far away from its original meaning, its etymology. Nevertheless, the fact that the old titles continued to be held testifies to the durability of what was once a life-sustaining connection between a group conceived as a descent group and its representatives.³⁴

Umbrians: Pliny, *Historia naturalis*, ed. and trans. by H. Rackham, vol. II, LCL (Cambridge, MA, 1947), III 14.112; cf. comments in *OCD*, 2nd and 3rd edns, s.vv.

³² Wenskus's most recent work ('Religion abâtardie' as at n. 15) is almost completely driven by etymology and the uncritical use of comparative religion.

³³ The pairs, on the model of group/leader, are as follows: *tribus/tribunus* (Latin), *thiuda/thiudans* (Gothic), *kind/kindins* (Gothic), *druht/druhtin* (Frankish); Wolfram, *Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*, p. 16; a similar account appears in idem, 'Typen der Ethnogenese', p. 612. Most of this goes back to Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, p. 69. The indiscreet addition of *tribunus* and kinship references are Wolfram's contribution.

³⁴ Wolfram, *Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*, p. 16. In the language of Wolfram, representation here refers to a sacral relationship. On representation in Wenskus, see *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, pp. 314–15 (citing Mitteis and Höfler). Wolfram imbibed the search for the irrational also directly from the *Stammvater* of Wodanic sacral-kingship teaching, Otto

It is difficult to understand how anyone familiar with the historical evidence for tribunician offices could write this. To begin with, there is no good evidence that the term *tribunus*, even in the darkest proto-history of Rome, referred to a tribal chief. What is more important, the term *tribunus* in historical sources does not pertain to an institution that went through some kind of evolution, dragging behind it primitive ideas of kinship and sacrality. The term is applied to different kinds of magistrates and office holders often contemporaneously.³⁵ In the late empire, military tribunes, upon whom Wolfram has decided to focus his remarks, were officers commissioned by the emperor, not representatives of their troops. One can be categorical. There is absolutely no institutional connection between late Roman unit commanders, called *tribuni*, and so-called primitive Roman 'tribal chiefs'.

The methodology when applied to a well-attested term reveals the problem. The confident, though often mystifying pronouncements uttered over the remains of Germanic terms are no better founded. The unwillingness to separate the — often invented — philological dimension of language (especially etymology) from its particular context in part explains Wolfram's frustrating tendency to espouse, almost in the same breath, completely contradictory realities.

III

Why has *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* been so influential? Wenskus has in recent times been praised for recognizing the artificial character of the constitution of the *gens* and for rejecting nineteenth- and twentieth-century racial and biological theories of ethnic development.³⁶ Practitioners of his model rarely fail to call attention to present

Höfler: cf. Höfler's 'Der Sakralcharakter des germanischen Königtums', printed several times in 1956; Otto Höfler: *Kleine Schriften*, ed. by Helmut Birkhan (Hamburg, 1992), pp. 255–84, is probably most convenient. Wolfram's views can be found among other places in his 'Methodische Fragen zur Kritik am "sakralen" Königtum germanischer Stämme', in *Festschrift für Otto Höfler*, ed. by H. Birkhan and O. Geschwantler (Vienna, 1968), II, 473–90. A critical appraisal of the historiography is given by Eve Picard, *Germanisches Sakralkönigtum: Quellenkritische Studien zur Germania des Tacitus und zur altnordischen Überlieferung* (Heidelberg, 1991).

³⁵ Jones, *LRE*, index, s.vv. tribunes, *tribunus*, gives a long list. *OCD*, s.vv. *tribuni aerarii*, *tribuni militum*, *tribuni plebis*, and *tribus*, can serve for the Republic; cf. the 2nd and 3rd editions.

³⁶ The implication in recent literature that before Wenskus scholars thought that the *gens* was a real descent group, and that it took Wenskus to see that the concept of common descent was a fiction, is quite incorrect. Wenskus himself provides a list of predecessors: *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, p. 15 n. 12; the list is selective. The fictive character of high order descent groups had long been an anthropological commonplace. Ironically Geary's, Wolfram's, and Pohl's ideas about kinship are a throwback to ideas that Wenskus (following Genzmer) apparently rejected in *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, and revive views that had earlier suggested the

ethnic conflicts and imply dire consequences if there is a failure to move toward their own enlightened view of the real origins of European peoples.³⁷

[T]ribes were [formerly] considered to have been hermetically closed communities, in which the members were very closely tied to each other by communal descent and by identical cult, language and morals. Today it is generally held that the tribes in the beginning of the Middle Ages consisted of a conglomeration of elements of various peoples.

Despite the slightly dated language, this comment on the *status questionis* may sound like recent appraisals that cite Wenskus as the source of our present-day wisdom. The quote actually comes from 1949, in part of a discussion of the early history of the Netherlands.³⁸ The point was modestly stated. It was not (or should not have been) really news in 1949. It is not news now; in fact the composite nature of early Germanic peoples has been recognized since the beginnings of modern scholarship.³⁹ The same article, incidentally, also rejected the simple equations between tribe, culture, language, and material remains.⁴⁰ Wenskus himself seems to have been under no misapprehension that his rejection of the *gens* as a homogeneous product of natural organic biological

natural and organic character of barbarian social and political organization. Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, pp. 11, 300–05.

³⁷ Recently Wolfram seems to have linked his warnings to those who question his method: 'The critical attitude toward this past [of gods, origin myths, and the like] has always done far less harm than the identification with the Germanic peoples; in fact, compared to the latter, it has *so far* been completely harmless' [my italics]; the views he refers to are 'after all nothing new, but rather an echo from the dark ages of nineteenth-century positivism' (Wolfram, *Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*, p. 15). Both Wolfram and Wenskus imagine their treatment of 'myth' is some species of functionalism (cf. *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, p. 108). If only that were true. Cf. n. 7, above.

³⁸ B. H. Slicher van Bath, 'Dutch Tribal Problems', *Speculum*, 24 (1949), 336. The reference to 'communal descent' is anything but outdated and shows the ability (apparently rare to non-existent among present-day ethnicity specialists) of distinguishing between descent from a common ancestor and descent from a group. It suggests, by the way, that earlier scholars were hardly as ignorant about the concept of ethnicity as present-day stereotypes imply.

³⁹ It is a notable theme in the work of jurist Karl Friedrich Eichhorn, *Deutsche Staats- und Rechtsgeschichte*, 4th edn (Göttingen, 1834), I, esp. pp. 58–60, 82–85, 106–60. I have not been able to consult earlier editions.

⁴⁰ This too has a context: see for example the critique of prewar assumptions by the noted Finnish archaeologist A. M. Tallgren, 'The Method of Prehistoric Archaeology', *Antiquity*, 11 (1937), 152–61 (it originally appeared in French the year before in *Eurasia Septentrionalis Antiqua*, 10). This was an influential article, but it is not without predecessors.

processes was his own doing.⁴¹ He did not write to establish this point. He wrote to counter its implication that *Stamm* tradition had been interrupted by the political processes of the *Völkerwanderungszeit*.⁴²

It is quite true that Wenskus attributes no significance to race in his explanation.⁴³ It is difficult to see why such a viewpoint of the 1960s should deserve special commendation, let alone be seen as a turning point in scholarship. Though race plays no role in Wenskus's model of ethnic development, one may as well note, however, that the model in itself does not preclude a racial interpretation. Modern commentators on this subject often seem to confound nationalism with racism. Prewar racial ideologies did not presuppose biologically homogeneous ethnic groups in the present or even in the distant historical past — quite the contrary. Race was seen as *the* dynamic and creative force in history precisely because it operated *within* historically constituted peoples; this is why European culture as a whole (and even the accomplishments of ancient Middle Eastern civilization) could be claimed as a product of the Nordic race and why eugenics was preached as selective purification.⁴⁴ The concepts of *Überlagerung* and *Oberschicht*

⁴¹ The scope of the historiographical framework is stated in the first sentences of the foreword to *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, p. ix: 'Vor etwa 150 Jahren mag die Verknüpfung der Begriffe "Stammesbildung" und "Verfassung" einigermaßen befremdlich angemutet haben. Sah man doch gerade in Stamm etwas "natürlich" Gewordenes, organisch Gewachsenes. [...] Die Wissenschaften, die sich bislang vor allem mit der Erforschung der Stämme beschäftigt hatten, mußten jedoch in Laufe der Zeit einsehen, daß sich Stämme dieser Art nirgends fassen ließen. So sagte man sich ausdrücklich vom romantischen Stammesbegriff des 19. Jahrhunderts los.' Cf. also *ibid.*, pp. 14, 87–89. I note in passing that old-style legal history never had any problem with the concept *Verfassung* being applied to the various Germanic peoples; cf. for example Eichhorn, *Deutsche Staats- und Rechtsgeschichte*.

⁴² Note the rejection of Franz Steinbach, *Studien zur westdeutschen Stammes- und Volks-geschichte*, Schriften des Instituts für Grenz- und Auslandsdeutschtum an der Universität Marburg, 5 (Jena, 1926), who gave primacy to the political processes of the period but saw discontinuity in their historical consequence.

⁴³ The section 'Gautyp und Rasse' (pp. 32–33) is the shortest of the eleven sections devoted to various characteristics of *Stämme* (Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, pp. 14–107). There is no polemic. Emic and etic perspectives are considered. Questions are asked; few answers are given.

⁴⁴ Hans F. K. Günther, *The Racial Elements of European History*, trans. by G. C. Wheeler (London, 1927; repr. 1970; trans. from the 2nd German edn, *Rassenkunde Europas* (Münich (1926)) is a good introduction. The well-meaning contemporary critique of such views in Julian Huxley and A. C. Haddon, *We Europeans: A Survey of 'Racial' Problems* (London, 1935), from an historical perspective, often misses the mark. For an official National Socialist pronouncement on the subject, see the guidelines for the teaching of history issued by the Minister of the Interior, Wilhelm Frick, in 1933: they were translated and published in *Nature*, 133 (February 1934), 298–99; the German text appears in the *Nachrichtenblatt für deutsche Vorzeit*, 9.6 (1933), 81–84.

tung ('overlayering'), *connubium* of the trans-tribal *Hochadel*, which was set apart from its subject populations, and the role of the nobility as *Traditionskerne* or bearers of tradition (*Träger der ethnischen Tradition*) and as exponents of *Gentilismus*, are perfectly consistent with a racial history should one wish to deploy them for such a purpose.⁴⁵

Wenskus was no innovator as far as biological interpretations of early European history were concerned. A general historiographical perspective suggests different reasons for the popularity of his ideas.⁴⁶ It is correct, I think, to point out that Wenskus's work came at the end of an historiographical development, not the beginning, encapsulating and systematizing half a century of scholarly revisionism in the areas of ethnology and Germanic antiquity. The work he produced is massive, drawing — often eclectically — on philology, prehistory (archaeology), history, and social science; historians who know of it only by reputation may be surprised to learn that it begins with the palaeolithic.⁴⁷

The guidelines cite both Günther and the noted prehistorian Gustaf Kossinna, who died the year before.

⁴⁵ *Überlagerung* and *Oberschichtung* refer to a process by which one group established superiority or rule over another. Prehistorians had used it to conceptualize the close juxtaposition of allegedly different cultural complexes. These concepts can be deployed to explain how a group of conquerors become a ruling class (*Oberschicht*), distinct in varying degrees from those it governed. On the connection with *connubium* of the nobility, which cut across tribal divisions: Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, pp. 25–26. On the *Hochadel* ('high nobility'), see p. 57.

It is apparent that where the location of the *germanische Urheimat*, the home of his *Traditionskerne*, was concerned, Wenskus was uncomfortable using such concepts to interpret what he saw as intrusive and dominating outside forces. He rejected the idea of the 'overlayering' of the so-called battle-axe and corded-ware people upon the native populations of the north; here he prefers *Durchschichtung* and *Homogenisierung*. His bizarre handling in this context of the precious-metal topos of Tacitus, *Germania*, 5 (ed. by J. G. C. Anderson (Oxford, 1938)), suggests some measure of his discomfort; *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, pp. 279–82.

⁴⁶ These ideas deserve separate evaluation for their significance within German scholarship, especially its specialist areas, which the present article does not pretend to do. Cf. the reviews of Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, by the historian František Graus, *Historica*, 7 (1963), 185–91, and by the prehistorian Rolf Hachmann, *Historische Zeitschrift*, 198 (1964), 663–74; and further, Hachmann's *Die Goten und Skandinavier* (Berlin, 1970), esp. pp. 3–4, 7–10, 147, 216–18. The multi-disciplinary and international dimension of relevant scholarship is hardly at any one person's command and creates a situation ripe for misunderstanding. In the developing international discourse of modern historiography, this problem will get worse. It is one of the main reasons for the present article.

⁴⁷ Some of the continental social science background is noted by Daim, 'Gedanken' (as at n. 18), pp. 65–67; and cf. Pohl, 'Tradition, Ethnogenese und literarische Gestaltung', p. 10. Daim's notion ('Gedanken', p. 61) that the individual determines ethnicity is a little misleading. Groups generally, though not universally, have a say on who will belong to them.

Wenskus did not rely on self-citation.⁴⁸ One of the great merits of his study is the extensive notes documenting several decades of German scholarship. But though it can be crushing in its breadth and detail — even for German readers⁴⁹ — it could hardly be exhaustive. English-language scholarship shows similar developments. Some readers of current ethnogenesis literature may be unaware that Wenskus's fundamental notions regarding the political and artificial character of the *gens*, the role of retinues and kingship, the contrast between north and south, among much else, were clearly laid out in the work of Hector Munro Chadwick, published in 1907.⁵⁰

Timing and focus had a lot to do with the success of Wenskus's work. Its publication was closely connected to the emergence of a new school of German constitutional history that had its roots in the 1930s but which began to dominate German scholarship in the 1950s; once known as the New History, it seems sufficient at the beginning of a new century just to call it the lordship theory. Its principal representatives were Heinrich Dannenbauer, Theodor Mayer, and Walter Schlesinger.⁵¹ The lordship theorists rejected

⁴⁸ Hachmann (review of Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, p. 664) did the math, and not in *laudem*: 1,125 works in the bibliography, not counting many others cited only in the notes; 3,600 notes.

⁴⁹ 'Das Buch ist klar aufgebaut und schreitet folgerichtig fort, wenn auch bisweilen in schier erdrückender Breite und Detailliertheit': Rafael von Ursler, 'Stämme und Frundgruppen: Bemerkungen zu *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* von R. Wenskus', *Germania*, 43 (1965), 139.

⁵⁰ Hector Munro Chadwick, *The Origin of the English Nation* (Cambridge, 1907), especially ch. 7, 'The Age of National Migrations', pp. 153–91. This is the second volume in a trilogy of interrelated works that established Chadwick (1870–1947) as an influential figure in British scholarship: the first work was *Studies on Anglo-Saxon Institutions* (Cambridge, 1905); the third, *The Heroic Age* (Cambridge, 1912). Chadwick's ideas anticipate more than those of Wenskus. They have, moreover, remained an influential source for early medievalists, especially Anglo-Saxonists. I expect few classicists have read him. Chadwick's work has been brought to the attention of Pohl ('Zwischenbilanz', p. 8) and Wolfram by Andreas Schwarcz, and Wolfram ('Typen der Ethnogenese', p. 609) now attributes the concept of *Traditionskern* jointly to Chadwick and Wenskus. Chadwick never employed the concept of *Traditionskern*. Wolfram was sufficiently familiar with Chadwick in 1990 to cite him as the authority for the concept 'Heroic Age' in *Das Reich und die Germanen*, p. 40.

⁵¹ Heinrich Dannenbauer, 'Adel, Burg und Herrschaft bei den Germanen', *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 61 (1941), reprinted and expanded in *Herrschaft und Staat im Mittelalter*, Wege der Forschung, 2 (Darmstadt, 1956), pp. 60–134; idem, 'Hundertschaft, Centena und Huntari', *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 62–69 (1949), 155–219. Theodor Mayer, articles in part reprinted in his *Mittelalterliche Studien* (Lindau, 1959). Walter Schlesinger, *Die Entstehung der Landesherrschaft* (1941; but cf. preface to repr., Darmstadt, 1964); idem, 'Herrschaft und Gefolgschaft in der germanisch-deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 176 (1953), 225–75, translated in part by F. L. Cheyette as 'Lord and Follower in Germanic Institutional History' in *Lordship and Community in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Cheyette (New York, 1968), pp. 64–99.

older notions that Germanic society had originally rested on democratic or popular foundations. Such a perception, in the new view, was simply a reflection of the wishful thinking of the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie; rather, the lordships of aristocratic houses were the historically important forces in German history both in the ancient and medieval periods. Much of the force of this argument came from projecting back upon the early Germanic period contentious interpretations of much later conditions. The touchstone in the debate was freedom and the free, the *liberi* of the early medieval sources. The old literature had seen them as a broad, politically significant class of common freemen — they were the *Volk*, the people, in the broad sociological and political sense of the term. The lordship theorists, who denied the existence of such a class of freemen, rechristened the *liberi* as the king's free, whom they now interpreted as the domestic dependents of the monarchy. Lordship theory in effect deprived the people of any significant role in the constitutional history of the early state.⁵²

The conjunction of this constitutional interpretation of German history with Wenskus's ethnic interpretation of the early Germanic *gentes* is quite evident. (Wenskus accepted the dubious theory of the king's free for instance.⁵³) Three aspects of the conjunction of Wenskus's views with the prevailing currents of German historiography are worth commenting on. As regards the first, I shall be brief. Despite acknowledgment

Aspects of their views are considered in my 'From Roman to Frankish Gaul: *Centenarii* and *Centenae* in the Administration of the Merovingian Kingdom', *Traditio*, 44 (1988), 59–100, and 'Immunity, Nobility, and the *Edict of Paris*', *Speculum*, 69 (1994), 18–39; both contain references to critical literature in German. For the intellectual and political background, see Howard Kaminsky and James Van Horn Melton, Introduction to their translation of Otto Brunner, *Land and Lordship: Structures of Government in Medieval Austria* (Philadelphia, 1992); the original German edition appeared in 1939. Some of the historiographical issues are also outlined by John B. Freed, 'Reflections on the Medieval Nobility', *AHR*, 91 (1986), 553–75.

⁵² The answer invited by Heinrich Dannenbauer's mocking query 'was der Unterschied ist zwischen einem germanischen König und einem Mamelukensultan' ('Die Freien im karolingischen Heer', in *Verfassungs- und Landesgeschichte: Festschrift Theodor Mayer*, ed. by Heinrich Buttner, Otto Feger, and Bruno Meyer (Lindau, 1954), p. 51) reveals some of the tone of the German argument, which was ideologically charged. Chadwick's approach to the matter had been temperate, even discreet; without quoting him, he directed readers to Julius Caesar for the hard point: 'Caesar's remarks on the condition of the Gaulish commons will likewise hold good for the northern Teutonic peoples of the migration period' (*Origin*, pp. 190–91). The reference must be to Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum*, VI 13 (ed. by Fr. Kraner and W. Dittenberger, 20th edn by H. Meusel, vol. II (Berlin, 1965)): 'Nam plebes paene servorum habetur loco, quae nihil audet per se, nullo adhibetur consilio. Plerique, cum aut aere alieno aut magnitudine tributorum aut iniuria potentiorum premuntur, sese in servitutem dicant nobilibus: in hos eadem omnia sunt iura, quae dominis in servos.' Dannenbauer was familiar with Chadwick's work.

⁵³ *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, pp. 451–53.

of Roman institutions by the exponents of the lordship theory,⁵⁴ their intention was to establish and redefine the continuities of German history from the Iron Age to the appearance of the German empire. It has become a cliché of the modern exponents of Wenskus's theory to assert the obvious truth that the history of the early medieval *gentes* is not necessarily German history;⁵⁵ and Wenskus too makes the distinction between German and Germanic history. No one who reads his book, however, can escape its focus on the geographical and ultimately political entity of modern Germany. It is dedicated to demonstrating the continuity of German history across the Middle Ages to the Iron Age and distant prehistory.⁵⁶ *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* is an earnest search to establish the foundations of German identity and the place of Germany in European history. In my view, the real interest of the book is to be found in the timing and character of this search.

The second aspect concerns the political dimension of Wenskus's thought. His introductory statement of idealism is neither exceptional nor incidental to the intellectual forces shaping his work.⁵⁷ Its particulars demand a little more attention. These too have a political and cultural context and reflect Otto Höfler's so-called *Kontinuitätsthese*, which became a staple of postwar scholarship when elements of it were widely taken up by historians of the new constitutional history.⁵⁸ Its formulation belongs to the cultural and ideological struggles of the 1930s. Höfler, a student of the Vienna Germanist Rudolph Much, first attracted attention in 1934 with a controversial thesis identifying among the *Germani* ecstatic male cultic associations ritually united with their ancestors and dedicated to the worship of Odin; within these *Männerbunde*, Höfler located that 'most distinctive attribute of the Nordic race', its power of state-building

⁵⁴ In particular, the Merovingian *centena*, which was interpreted as originally a settlement of king's free on fiscal land, was thought to be patterned after Roman military settlements of *limitanei* and *laeti*. This idea has little to recommend it: cf. Murray, 'Centenarii and Centenae,' as at n. 51.

⁵⁵ It seems, however, a bit disingenuous for Wolfram to tell his readers in *Das Reich und die Germanen*, which forms the first volume of a section called *Das Reich und die Deutschen*, in a series called *Deutsche Geschichte*, that the Germans have as much a Germanic history as other peoples, whom he lists; included in the list of those with a Germanic history are the Turks and the Irish (*Roman Empire and Its Barbarian Peoples*, p. 12). The Turks and the Irish would not seem to have any at all; but cf. p. 63 below.

⁵⁶ *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, pp. 82–85. The *Stämme* are older than the *deutsche Volk*.

⁵⁷ See above, at n. 23. On the ideological opposition between the Germanic north and southern Roman/Christian universalism in the literature of the 1930s and 1940s (though the comparison also predates this period), see Paul Koschaker, *Europa und das Römische Recht*, 3rd edn (Munich, 1958), pp. 324–25.

⁵⁸ Klaus von See, *Kontinuitätstheorie und Sakraltheorie in der Germanenforschung: Antwort an Otto Höfler* (Frankfurt am Main, 1972), esp. pp. 41–42.

(*staatenbildende Kraft*).⁵⁹ 1938, the year Höfler took up a post at Vienna, was a banner year for the dissemination of his views on the political character of Germanic tradition, now broadened beyond so-called cultic associations to include themes of conventional historical interest. His aim in lectures and articles of that year was to direct concern with continuity in German history away from classical antiquity and focus it on a path he claimed led back three thousand years into Germanic prehistory; this newly defined *germanische Kontinuitätsproblem*, central in his view to German identity, should be a principal undertaking of historical endeavour.⁶⁰ He laid out its implications for the history of the migration period in May in a talk he gave before the *NSD-Dozentenbund* of Christian-Albrechts-Universität, designed to counter the impression created by *germanische Altertumskunde* that the early Germanic period was notable mainly for its cultural achievements.⁶¹ Opposing what he saw as the widespread acceptance of humanist aspersions cast upon the dull-wittedness of German political thinking and its dependence upon Rome for the idea of the *Reich*, he argued that native Germanic political conceptions were the basis for the cultural achievement about which modern Germans were so rightly proud. He began his argument with an even bolder claim, that 'in fact it was the creative political power of the early Germanic period that established the basis for the political system of Europe even down to the present day'.⁶² More interesting than this ambitious thesis, and the paranoid conjunction of superiority and

⁵⁹ Otto Höfler, *Kultische Geheimbünde der Germanen* (Frankfurt am Main, 1934): 'Die eigenste Begabung der nordischen Rasse, ihre staatenbildende Kraft, fand in den Männerbünden ihre Stätte' (p. 357). On the cultural background of the *Männerbund* idea: Klaus von See, 'Männerbund und Männerbund-Ideologie von der Wilhelmischen Zeit bis zum Nationalsozialismus', in his *Barbar, Germane, Arier: Die Suche nach der Identität der Deutschen* (Heidelberg, 1994), pp. 319–44. On Höfler and the rivalry to control the National Socialist agenda on scholarship: Klaus von See, 'Das "Nordische" in der deutschen Wissenschaft des 20. Jahrhunderts', *Jahrbuch für Internationale Germanistik*, 15 (1983), esp. pp. 29–36. Höfler's patron was Himmler, who facilitated his appointments at Kiel in 1934 and then at Vienna in 1938. On the treatment of National Socialism in present-day *germanische Altertumskunde*: Goffart, 'Germanic Antiquity Today', pp. 9–19.

⁶⁰ Otto Höfler, 'Das germanische Kontinuitätsproblem', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 157 (1938), 1–26. This is the most famous statement of the thesis because it contains the argument that the imperial insignia of the holy lance was actually the mark of Odin. According to Birkhan's bibliography (as in n. 34 above), the piece also appeared the same year in the *Schriften des Reichsinstituts für Geschichte des neuen Deutschland*; a Dutch translation followed in 1943 in *Volksche Wacht*, 8. See next note for a slightly different version of the thesis.

⁶¹ Otto Höfler, 'Die politische Leistung der Völkerwanderungszeit', in *Kleine Schriften*, pp. 1–16; originally published in *Kieler Blätter*, 4 (1938), 282–97. The piece bears comparison with Frick's guidelines (above, n. 44).

⁶² 'Auf den Schöpfungen der politischen Gestaltungskraft gerade jener frühgermanischen Zeit beruht bis heute das politische System Europas' (ibid., p. 1).

inferiority in its exposition, were the elements Höfler thought supported his political viewpoint: the continuity of political-genealogical consciousness extending deep into the heathen period; the connection between names and continuous political identity, linking prehistorical and historical times; the priority of the political, artificial group over the natural, kinship-based forms of society; the importance of the political institutions of sacral kingship and retinues; the sacral character of the community, founded upon kingship; and the potential of myth to open up the inner spiritual meaning of the political community. Höfler sketched all this out clearly before wandering off into a heathen fascist never-never land of death-cults and religious transfiguration presided over by Odin; we will never know, I suppose, whether the last part roused, puzzled, or sedated his audience. Wenskus's version of Höfler's thesis was certainly not designed to rouse. It was a bourgeois delight, restrained, mounded in footnotes, careful to avoid polemic, with rarely anything resembling a big picture at all. Odin was tamed and the exposition cast in the ethnic conceptions of *Stammeskunde*.⁶³ But the subject was the same: the role of political forces, rooted in sacral conceptions of the world, and the subordination of historical process to a particular type of northern political thinking that expressed the power of the Germanic *gentes*. The method was the same as well, founded upon the hidden meaning of names, genealogy, and myth.

The third aspect of Wenskus's conjunction with the main lines of contemporary history was the focus upon the aristocratic character of the early Germanic state. According to Wenskus, tribal self-consciousness — the principal criterion of ethnicity — did not embrace all members evenly but was the preserve of a small tradition-bearing core of nobles closely connected to the king. Kingship lay at the heart of tradition and embodied the *gens*, the genealogy of king and the *gens* being irrationally identified one with the other. Wenskus was aware of the paradoxes of his model. He located ethnic thinking for instance among the group — the high nobility — that, in his view, regarded itself as separated by descent from the rest of society and unfettered by the endogamy that bound the non-noble stratum of the *gens*.⁶⁴ He stressed as well the prevalence of foreigners in royal service within those circles charged with preserving the distinctive

⁶³ Regarding constitutional history, Karl Bosl judged in 1962 that Höfler's continuity thesis still remained the *Kernfrage* of all research on the *Germanen* — after purification administered by H. Aubin and rehabilitation of the concept of Roman continuity, among other adjustments (Karl Bosl, 'Die germanische Kontinuität im deutschen Mittelalter', repr. in his *Frühformen der Gesellschaft im mittelalterlichen Europa* (Munich, 1964), pp. 80–105). Wenskus's approach in *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* to Höfler's ideas was more discreet. Wolfram's recent retrospective statement that it was Wenskus's adaptation of ethnology that made the study of the *Germanen* thinkable once again 'nach den germanomanischen Exzessen' of the past (Herwig Wolfram, *Die Germanen* (Munich, 1995), p. 10) surely reflects this context. Adoption of Geary's quotation (at n. 24 above) seems to be part of the purification. Höfler was no stranger to ethnology; cf. the ironical comment of von See, "'Nordische" in der deutschen Wissenschaft', p. 32.

⁶⁴ *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, pp. 17–32.

ethnic tradition of the *gens*. As a partial explanation for features that seemed to belie the ethnic concept, Wenskus relied on the argument that feelings of ethnic belonging were fluid in early states, which were constituted by personal ties.⁶⁵

Paradox is a recurrent feature of attempts to make use of Wenskus's ideas of ethnicity. Wolfram's recent effort to establish a typology of ethnogenesis on the Wenskus model, for instance, was soon reduced simply to a dubious classification of kingship types.⁶⁶ The reason for this is simple, the outcome almost unavoidable. Wenskus's notion of the *gens* has little room for anything but narrow concepts of royal service, tradition, and archaic kingship, which alone provides cohesion and historical continuity. Just as the lordship school had banished the *Volk* from German constitutional history, Wenskus's model of tribal development did the same for its ethnic history.

Some conclusions that have taken their departure from Wenskus's ideas are less inevitable. His notion that ethnicity was political in origin, fluid, and limited to a restricted circle is readily adaptable to modern sociological notions of ethnicity as an arbitrary situational construct. These ideas have been used by Patrick Geary in a study of ethnic terminology in the Frankish kingdom to argue that ethnicity was a malleable construct that was determined mainly by political circumstances and by the interests of lordship.⁶⁷ The method depends on confounding the occasions when ethnicity is mentioned (in political narratives, these occasions tend unsurprisingly to be political and military) with the criteria for ethnicity, and on finding confusion and contradiction in the sources' attribution of ethnicity.⁶⁸ The sources do not comply with the method. Their testimony tends to run doggedly to the banal, unambiguous, and conventional — ethnic association was something one was born into: a person was a Frank, a Roman, or a

⁶⁵ Chadwick's expression of the same idea is ambiguous and equally unsatisfactory: 'It fully accords with this absence of a national organization [that is, one independent of the king and his officials] that we find but little trace of any feeling of patriotism as we understand it' (*Origin*, p. 172).

⁶⁶ Wolfram, 'Typen der Ethnogenese'.

⁶⁷ Geary, 'Ethnic Identity as a Situational Construct'.

⁶⁸ Various types of identifiers are taken by Geary to be ethnic identifiers. Thus a term like *dux Alamannorum* is interpreted as meaning that the holder of the title in question is being designated an Alamannian by ethnicity. (The title is a term of office and has no such implication.) Supposed contradictions in the sources are then found: a certain Adalricus is said by various sources to have been born in Gaul, to be of a noble Frankish family, and to have led the Alamannian forces as a duke appointed by the Frankish king. Each of these methods of identification is interpreted by Geary as separate, contradictory ethnicities: Gaul, Frank, Alamannian (Geary, 'Ethnic Identity as a Situational Construct', pp. 23–24, 25). Instrumental analysis is then used to resolve the contradictions and reveal the 'true' basis of ethnic affiliation. There are in fact no contradictions to begin with. As to the paradoxical claim that 'it is seldom if ever possible to determine exactly why an individual was termed a Goth, Frank, Roman, or Burgundian' (p. 21), see next note.

Burgundian by birth.⁶⁹ The present observation pertains to the synchronic context of ethnicity, of course; ethnic denominators rarely remain fixed when viewed over substantial periods of time. One need only consider the shifting compass and locus of the terms *Franci* and *Francia*, for example.⁷⁰

Similar methodological problems have also produced flawed results in the recent, much more ambitious work of Patrick Amory, who likewise confounds various types of identity — especially military and political allegiance and alliance — with ethnicity.⁷¹ His premise that the sources are confused on these matters is a perilous point of departure. It is hardly likely that ethnicity, whatever one is to make of its depth in society or the intensity of feelings it aroused, was simply an instrumental category and an attribute of royal ideology and political strategy. More often than not it seems to have had very little to do with political allegiance at all.

IV

From an historiographical perspective, Wenskus's ideas served to adapt the traditional concern with the *Stamm* and ethnicity to the new suppositions about German history that became increasingly prevalent after World War II; most of these suppositions were derived from the cultural and ideological conflicts of the 1930s. In this reinterpretation the history of the Franks played a pivotal role, as they constituted the link between the Germanic period and the emergence of Germany out of the Carolingian state.

⁶⁹ Fredegar, *Chron.*, IV 18, 24, 28, 29, refers to a series of five Frankish and Roman Burgundian mayors of the palace and patricians, mentioning the ethnic identity of each one by the phrase *genere Francus* or *genere Romanus*; that is they were either Romans or Franks by birth. In a famous passage (*ibid.*, 78), he also identifies in a similar way the ethnicity of ten *duces* and a patrician leading Burgundian forces against the Gascons. Eight of the generals are Franks by birth; the other three are Roman, Burgundian, and Saxon respectively. The ethnic terms do not refer to the make-up of the forces under the command of each duke, as imagined by Geary. Cf. also *Herpo dux genere Francus* who was given ducal command over the Transjurans (*ibid.*, 43).

⁷⁰ In passing, it is worth noting that the territorial designation is as old as the name of the *gens*. *Francia* is found in early-fourth-century sources (*Pan. Lat.*, VI 10 (a. 310)) and appears on the right bank of the Rhine in the Peutinger Table. One can readily argue for a Roman perspective here, but the tendency to insist on the personal character of early states is a little surprising in view of the assertion by the philologically inclined that **theotho* (supposedly equivalent of *gens*, see n. 17 above) could mean land as well as people. The methods of philological history are selective. The model prevailing among many German historians is that the early state, like the *gens*, must have been a *Personenverbandsstaat*. The personal/territorial distinction is artificial.

⁷¹ Amory, *People and Identity*, pp. 168–89, 178–79 (the reference to Jordanes needs to be looked at in the original), 188–91, may serve as examples.

Wenskus's approach to the development of the Franks provides further occasion for more closely evaluating his methodology and treatment of sources.⁷²

The term Franks appears in Roman sources in the late third century as a general term for various peoples on the right bank of the lower Rhine; by the time of its appearance, the name was clearly well established.⁷³ The term is Germanic but the circumstances that gave rise to it are unknown. Whether the currency of the term in the fourth century is due to the Rhineland peoples themselves or the Romans is an open question, but most scholars have tended to accept that the term arose as a name for a confederacy of the Rhineland peoples. Interestingly enough, Wenskus rejected the idea of a confederacy of equal tribes, a concept foreign to his understanding of early political conditions.⁷⁴ Viewing the term as an adjectival substantive meaning the 'free' or 'bold', he preferred to see it in origin as an epithet for one of the older tribal names later widely adopted through self-association by neighbouring peoples.⁷⁵ Among those were the Salians, the source of the Merovingian house and the Frankish kingdom in Gaul, who first appear in fourth-century sources.⁷⁶

⁷² *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, pp. 512–41.

⁷³ *Pan. Lat.*, XI, a. 291. Aurelius Victor's history, referring to Franks under Gallienus (a. 260–67), is not a primary source: T. D. Barnes, 'The Franci before Diocletian', in *Historiae Augustae Colloquium Genevense*, ed. by Giorgio Bonamente and François Paschoud, *Historiae Augustae Colloquia*, n.s., 2 (Bari, 1994), pp. 11–18; cf. Murray, *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul*, nos 1, 2 (pp. 2–9).

⁷⁴ He claims the idea is a model derived from nineteenth-century nationalism: *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, p. 77, and cf. pp. 460–61. He cites earlier rejections of the *Bund* idea by Waitz, Büttner, and De Boone, who come to different conclusions; he might have added Eichhorn (as at n. 39 above).

⁷⁵ In Wenskus's classification system, the Franks are a *Stammesschwarm*, a shifting, open association of tribes (cf. *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, p. 53); his reading of Libanios, *Or.* LIX 135 is forced (*ibid.*, p. 518, n. 585; Libanios, *Opera*, ed. by R. Foerster, vol. 4 (Leipzig, 1904)). Wenskus draws on African ethnographic examples for the notion of self-association (*ibid.*, p. 78); association with peoples in the past, well attested in the Middle Ages, seems to me a distinct practice.

⁷⁶ Wenskus's view that the Salians were the leading people of the Franks in the mid-fourth century is based on a mistaken understanding of Amm. Marc. XVII 8.3 ('petit primos omnium Francos'): cf. XIV 9.4; XVI 2.12; XVI 8.12, etc.

Matthias Springer's recent contention that the ethnic term *Salii* arose as a result of Julian's misunderstanding of a native word seems to me to involve a series of possibilities regarding the sources that in the end are not convincing individually and therefore fail doubly as a thesis of interconnected arguments: 'Gab es ein Volk der Salier?', in *Nomen et Gens: Zur historischen Aussagekraft frühmittelalterlicher Personennamen*, ed. by Dieter Geuenich, Wolfgang Haubrichs, and Jörg Jarnut, *RGA Ergänzungsbände*, 16 (Berlin, 1997), pp. 58–83. Among the less likely of the possibilities is the beginning point of the argument, namely that Julian decided to use a word he heard from the Franks for the first time in his campaign of 358.

The search for the origins of the Salians in one of the previously attested names of the Rhineland peoples has long been, and remains, a keenly pursued, if fruitless, enterprise. Wenskus rejected the usual local suspects, in particular the *Sugambri*, whose name appears in Remigius's famous injunction to Clovis at the time of his baptism: 'Gently bow your head, Sicamber; worship that which you have burned; burn that which you have worshipped.'⁷⁷ The *Sugambri*, a people of uncertain linguistic affiliation, had been a thorn in the side of the Romans in the times of Caesar and Augustus; early in the first century they were finally annihilated and the survivors transported to Gaul.⁷⁸ Wenskus followed the view, common since the late nineteenth century, that the reappearance of the name in fifth-century sources was due to antiquarianism, not the persistence of first-century ethnic tradition. But in an argument anticipating the current ready detection of ethnic politics, he proposed the provisional hypothesis that Remigius's injunction reflected a political program whereby the king hoped to unify various Rhineland elements under an invented identity. Although the suitability of the Sugambrian name for this purpose can be argued, it is not particularly evident nor is there evidence for use of the name by the Frankish kings. The simplest explanation for Remigius's words is the late Roman rhetorical tradition of which the bishop of Rheims was a master.⁷⁹

As a source of genuine tradition, Wenskus's eye fell on a more distant candidate: the *Chauci* on the North-Sea coast of northern Germany. The *Chauci*, like the *Sugambri*, were a people of the early empire whose name reappears around 400 in the mélange of antique ethnic appellations and upside-down geography of Claudian's verses.⁸⁰ A connection with the early Franks is not claimed by any ancient or Merovingian source,

⁷⁷ Gregory of Tours, *Hist.*, II 39. Modern exponents of the *Sugambri*-thesis tend to be divided on whether Sugambrian descent should be attributed to the Franks as a people or just the Merovingian house. The distinction is moot since the main premise is untenable.

⁷⁸ Caesar, *Bell. Gall.*, IV 16, 18, 19; VI 35; Strabo, *Geographia*, ed. and trans. by Horace Leonard Jones, vol. II, LCL (Cambridge, MA, 1923), IV 3.4; Tacitus, *Annales*, ed. and trans. by John Jackson, vols II and III, LCL (Cambridge, MA, 1931), II 26.2, XII 39.2; Suetonius, *Aug.*, ed. and trans. J. C. Rolfe, vol. I, LCL (Cambridge, MA, 1951), XXI 2; *Tib.* IX 2. Thomas Anderson Jr.'s supposition of a left bank Sugambrian ethnic 'reservation', or colony, supplying Roman troops from the time of the Julio-Claudians to the Merovingians is quite unsupported in the sources: 'Roman Military Colonies in Gaul, Salian Ethnogenesis and the Forgotten Meaning of *Pactus Legis Salicae* 59.5', *Early Medieval Europe*, 4 (1995), 135–44, esp. 136–37 and n. 31. There is no regiment of the *VI cohors Sugambriorum* in *Not. dig., Or.*, XXXI 66.

⁷⁹ Cf. Sidonius Apollinaris's letter to Remigius: *Sidonius: Poems and Letters*, ed. by W. B. Anderson, vol. II, LCL (Cambridge, MA, 1965), *Ep.* IX 7.

⁸⁰ Claudian, *Eutr.*, I 379 (Honorius giving them *leges*); a right-bank *Sygambria* appears a few lines later (383); idem, *Stil.*, I 225. Nearby are references to *Salii*, *Sygambri*, and *Franci*. As a result of Stilicho's efforts, Claudian seems to think that the Gauls were free to pasture their flocks on the middle Elbe, among the Franks! Elsewhere Claudian deals happily in Assyrians, Parthians, and Medes.

but depends on the modern deployment of asterisk philology, the inventive interpretation of late sources, and a profound faith in the undetectable, subterranean passage of ancient traditions. The argument is again based on names: specifically the *Hugas*, the name of a people mentioned in *Beowulf* associated with the Franks and Frisians; the personal name Hugo or Hugh attributed by Widukind of Corvey in his Saxon history (c. 967) to the father of the early-sixth-century Merovingian Theuderic I; and, in the early-eleventh-century annals of Quedlinburg, another Saxon history, the attribution of the name Hugo, as a term for Frank, to the same Theuderic, and the claim that once upon a time all the Franks were called *Hugones* after a duke of that name. These names, so it is argued, derive, despite phonological difficulties, from a Germanic **hauhos*, the equivalent of the *Chauci* of early Latin sources.⁸¹ This fine example of nineteenth-century *Germanistik* has long been used to argue that the *Chauci* were one of the peoples making up the Franks or that the Franks arose from the *Chauci*, and in epic tradition bore their name.

Wenskus's spin on this venerable thesis was to claim *Chauci* origins only for the *Traditionskern* connected with the Merovingian house, thus, incidentally, leaving the *Chauci* available for Saxon ethnogenesis as well. Enlisting another old theory in support of a northern origin, he also argued that behind Gregory of Tours's famous reference to the Pannonian origin of the Franks lay a tradition that actually mentioned a northern place name, such as Baunonia, a location on the North Sea referred to by Pliny in the first century, and which the bishop interpreted as the Pannonian birthplace of his hero St Martin.⁸²

This chain of conjecture is revealing about the premises that drive Wenskus's understanding of European and German history. The choice of the *Chauci* as the source of Merovingian tradition is due to no accidental conjunction of limited sources,

⁸¹ *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. by Frederick Klaeber, 3rd edn (Boston, 1950), lines 1202–14, 2354–68, 2501–08 (*Hugas*), 2911–21 (*Hugas*); there is no reason to take *Hugas* as a synonym for the Franks in these lines. Widespread, though not universal, agreement now exists that the *terminus ad quem* for the composition of *Beowulf* in its present form includes the ninth and tenth centuries. Widukind, *Res gestae Saxonice*, ed. by Paul Hirsch and Hans-Eberhard Lohmann, 5th edn (Hannover, 1935), I 9, pp. 10–11; *Annales Quedlinburgenses*, ed. by Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH Scriptores III (Hannover, 1839), p. 31. The sources are appraised by Walter Goffart, 'Hetware and Hugas: Datable Anachronism in Beowulf', in *The Dating of Beowulf*, ed. by Colin Chase (Toronto, 1981), pp. 83–100. On the phonology, cf. Wenskus, in *RGA* IV (1981), s.v. *Chauken* I, II: 'Möglicherweise haben wir auch hier, wie so oft in der Namenwelt, besondere Bedingungen vor uns, die das Problem komplizieren und eine eindeutige Antwort unmöglich machen' (p. 397).

⁸² Gregory of Tours, *Hist.*, II 9; Pliny, *Hist. Nat.*, IV 94. Geary, *Before France and Germany*, p. 77, somehow imagines that a Pannonian origin was also intended to bring the Franks close to the homeland of the prestige-laden Goths. Geary's Franks suffer from a severe case of Goth-envy.

uncritical methodology, and a naive desire to discover the past. Undeserving candidates have to be eliminated, like the *Sugambri*, locals with dubious linguistic credentials and, as it turns out, despite their location in the future *Francia*, the wrong geographical position, or that folk with the resonating name, the *Marvingi*, whose eastern direction in Ptolemy's second-century *Geography* is suitable but not their southern placement, close to Gregory's Pannonia.⁸³ There is more at work than just the compulsion to deploy bad evidence. A North-Sea origin for so-called Merovingian tradition in the archaic perimeter of the ancient world provides, as other locations do not, a source for the elements of sacral-kingship theory, with its love of ritual ox carts, royal fertility rites, and libidinous sea-beasts.⁸⁴ The *Chauci*, an offshoot of whom Wenskus detects in Ireland in the *Kaukoi* of Ptolemy's *Geography*, are also included by him among that select group of *Stamm* names, including the putative neighbours of the *Chauci*, the *Teutones* and *Ambrones*, whose expansion from the north-German, south-Scandinavian *Urheimat* shaped European history even before linguistic differentiation.⁸⁵ It is difficult to escape the conclusion that, for Wenskus, the *Chauci*-origin of the Frankish *Traditionskern* certifies, through the creative and sacrally conceived power of *Gentilismus*, the domestic origins of German history; it brings the beginnings of Frankish — and by extension German — history back home as if by magic to the north German *Urheimat*.

Apart from the *Traditionskern* motif, Wenskus's account of Frankish origins sticks pretty well to the philological premises of nineteenth-century *germanische Stammeskunde*. His treatment of the foundation of the Frankish kingdom on imperial territory, on the other hand, closely adheres to the standard themes of the lordship theory: the seizure of Gaul by various Frankish groups, carried out by means of retinues; the rise of Clovis, leader of the Salian Franks, and, in Wenskus's terms, the victory of Merovingian tradition; the acquisition of imperial domains settled by *coloni* and military colonists called *laeti*; the parallel settlement by the Merovingians of their dependents,

⁸³ Ptolemy, *Geog.*, II 10. It is interesting that a recent effort to plumb the philological depths of Merovingian personal names assumes (surely wrongly) that the element *mar-* is a clear sign of Merovingian connections: Eugen Ewig, 'Die Namegebung bei den ältesten Frankenkönigen und im merovingischen Königshaus', *Francia*, 18.1 (1981), 29.

⁸⁴ Such notions can perhaps be conjured up for many places, but the *locus classicus* that at least mentions wagons and fertility and a location near the sea is Tacitus, *Germania*, 40, on the goddess Nerthus.

⁸⁵ 'In diesen Fällen dürfen wir wohl mit einiger Bestimmtheit annehmen, daß die Stammes-tradition in die Zeit vor der Ausbildung der germanischen Sprachgemeinschaft zurückreicht': *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, p. 298. The cases include *Teutones*, *Ambrones*, *Chauci*, *Ingaevones*, *Eudoses*, *Hermunduri*, *Suebi*, Goths, and Frisians. See above p. 47. In 'Religion abâtardie' (pp. 190–91 with n. 64, 201, 217–18), Wenskus returns to the Irish *Kaukoi*, now called Germanic and identified with an apparently historical *Ui Cúich*, in a string of literary and philological allusions that are intended to establish the north-German religious foundations of Fredegar's story of Merovech's birth (*Chron.*, III 9).

the king's free (*Franci homines*), on crown lands. A distinguishing feature of Wenskus's version of these events and the character of the Frankish state was his insistence on the ancient Germanic roots of the settlement of military dependents on crown lands, which he saw as a practice not patterned after Roman administrative procedures but merely rationalized by them.⁸⁶ His remaining treatment of Frankish tradition is limited to explaining the preservation of the name in the Paris Basin and in the east-Rhenish territory of Franconia — which he attributes to the former's close association with the Merovingian monarchy and the latter's colonization by the king's free.

What is wrong with this version of the origins of the Franks and the Merovingian kingdom? A sketch of what Frankish sources actually do say about origins and tradition suggests the depth of the problem. No mention of *Chauci* tradition or sacral kingship is to be found: sacral kingship is an idea derived not from the religious-political rituals of primitive Franks but the irrational conceits of modern political thinking.⁸⁷ The king's free too are invisible: this concept is the product of an extreme ideological reaction to the democratic aspirations of nineteenth-century legal history.⁸⁸ What *can* be found are relatively late sources that reflect retrospectively on the early history of the Franks and their kingdom.

The first of these is the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours, who completed his work in 594, the year of his death. Although he alludes in a matter-of-fact fashion to a contemporary view that the Franks came from Pannonia, his real concern was the origins of Frankish kingship, not of the Franks as a people.⁸⁹ One could construe this circumstance in favour of Wenskus's model. But in Gregory's approach, the origins of Frankish kingship were treated as a problem to be solved not a story to be recounted, a circumstance that hardly speaks to the supposition of the royal house as the essence of the *gens*, imprinting its own traditions upon the ingenuous ethnic consciousness of its followers and subjects. Gregory's efforts, which seem to have been focused and directed, have left to us important excerpts from the fourth- and fifth-century histories of Sulpicius Alexander and Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus, whose three names, to paraphrase Gibbon, show him to be a Roman citizen, a Christian, and a barbarian.⁹⁰ The best that Gregory

⁸⁶ See at n. 54 above.

⁸⁷ The Frankish evidence is considered in my 'Post vocantur Merohingii: Fredegar, Mero-vech, and "Sacral Kingship"', in *After Rome's Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History, Essays Presented to Walter Goffart*, ed. by Alexander Callander Murray (Toronto, 1998), pp. 121–52. On the ox-wagon of the last Merovingians, cf. also Adolf Gauert, 'Noch einmal Einhard und the letzte Merowinger', in *Institutionen, Kultur und Gesellschaft im Mittelalter: Festschrift für Josef Fleckenstein*, ed. by Lutz Fenske, Werner Rösener, and Thomas Zotz (Sigmaringen, 1984), pp. 59–72.

⁸⁸ See p. 54 and n. 52 above.

⁸⁹ Gregory of Tours, *Hist.*, II 9–10. For the contemporary context for the Pannonian reference, see Goffart in this volume, at nn. 14–15.

⁹⁰ Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London, 1776–88), ch. 30, n. 89.

could do with this material is speculate on the possible connections of the current line of kings to an impressive mid-fifth-century king of the Franks called Chlodio.⁹¹ So much for the ideological cultivation and propagation of genealogy by the Merovingian *Traditionskern*.⁹²

Gregory's history provided the basis for later historians, but they were hardly content with his meagre offerings, especially as historical interest now encompassed the problem of the origins of the Franks as a people. Historians extended the history of the Franks and the genealogy of its kings deep into the past, but in a direction that has often caused bitter lamentation among modern searchers for the traditions of Germanic antiquity. The solution to Frankish origins as we find it in the seventh-century historical compilation of Fredegar and the early-eighth-century *Liber historiae Francorum* drew on a theme that had already been widely used in European historiography. The Romans and some other western peoples, taking their cue from Greek historiography, had long since claimed to owe their origins to the dispersal of Trojans after the sack of Troy, the great event of Hellenic history. In Fredegar and the *Liber historiae Francorum*, the motif of Trojan descent was applied to the Franks, whose origins now, and for almost a millennium hereafter, were traced to the Fall of Troy.⁹³

⁹¹ Gregory did not have access to the Gallic panegyrics of the late third and early fourth centuries. The first references to the Franks and *Francia* is to their kings: *Pan. Lat.*, X 10; XI 7; VI 10 (*reges Franciae*).

⁹² Gregory was anything but loath to give Clovis distinguished ancestry — but the proof he had to rely on was the king's victories in battle, not genealogy (*Hist.*, II 10).

⁹³ Fredegar, *Chron.*, II 4–6, 8–9, and III 2, 9; *Liber historiae Francorum*, 1–4, ed. by Bruno Krusch, MGH Ss rer Merov II (Hannover, 1888). Whether Gregory of Tours knew a version of the story still remains an open question. Jonathan Barlow's attempt to argue that the theory of Trojan origins was already applied to the right bank of the Rhine in the fourth century is based on a misreading of Ammianus Marcellinus: 'Gregory of Tours and the Myth of the Trojan Origins of the Franks', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 29 (1995), 86–95. Amm. Marc. XV 9.1–7, recounts various points of view on the origins of the Gauls: first autochthony; second Dorian immigration; next the claim of the Druids, namely that some part of the Gauls was made up of refugees from war and flood from remote islands and regions across the Rhine. Then comes the fourth claim, that of Trojan immigration: 'Aiunt quidam paucos post excidium Troiae fugitantes Graecos ubique dispersos loca haec occupasse tunc vacua.' Barlow takes the *haec loca* as the lands deserted by the refugees mentioned in the Druidical theory, but the passage recounts a theory independent of that of the Druids; the 'loca haec [. . .] tunc vacua' are the regions of Gaul in primeval times prior to being inhabited, not territories across the Rhine. Finally comes the view of the majority of the Gauls (*regionum incolae*) regarding their origins. Ammianus's subject is Gaul and Gallic civilization, not *insulae extimae* and *tractus transrhenani*.

Eugen Ewig, 'Trojamythos und fränkische Frühgeschichte', in *Franken und Alemannen*, pp. 1–30, dates both the Fredegarian and *Liber historiae Francorum* versions of the Trojan tale prior to Gregory and proposes the bishop's knowledge of them; to do so, he is compelled to assume

The significance of this view has not been exhaustively studied, though one might doubt its relevance to the practical realities of ethnicity. I will here confine myself to two observations regarding its bearing upon Wenskus's theory of Frankish ethnicity. First, archaic ethnic thinking, Wenskus assured us, conceived of the *gens* as a community of descent, a clan in a large sense; he understood by this belief in descent from a common ancestor or ancestral pair.⁹⁴ Such a notion is in fact rarely attested in the early Middle Ages and certainly not in Frankish texts.⁹⁵ Fredegar and the *Liber historiae Francorum* understood the Franks to be descendants of the Trojans, but as a people one from the other, not as a descent group from a single point.

Second, Fredegar and the authors of the *Liber historiae Francorum*, like Gregory of Tours before them, were unaware of Frankish 'gentile' tradition as that phrase is understood by Wenskus. This was not a cultural or ideological oversight on their part. All these historians dealt at some point with genealogy and common tales of various kinds, and Fredegar and the author of the *Liber historiae Francorum* were intensely interested in fleshing out the narrative they inherited from previous sources.⁹⁶ To picture them overlooking the cultivated ancient traditions of an ethnically conscious, ideologically combative political group around the monarchy (*Traditionskern*) is to wed

much, including multiple authorship of Fredegar, the domestic pagan myth of the Merovingian house, and an implausible interpretation of the epilogue of *Lex Salica*.

⁹⁴ See n. 26 above.

⁹⁵ Even Isidore of Seville's etymologically driven interpretation of *gens* (*Etymologiae*, ed. by W. M. Lindsay, vol. I (Oxford, 1911), IX 2.1) fails to measure up to Wenskus's notion of primitive ethnic thinking: 'Gens est multitudo ab uno principio orta, sive ab alia natione secundum propriam collectionem distincta, ut Graeciae, Asiae' ('*Gens* is a large group sprung from the same beginnings, or distinguished from other peoples by coming together of its own accord, like the people of Greece or Asia'). The first definition of the two could include a descent group but is still cast in abstract terms. Cf. *Etymologies*, IX 4.4 on *genus* (in the sense of family): 'Genus aut a gignendo et prognerando dictum aut a definitione certorum prognatorum, ut nationes quae propriis cognationibus terminatae gentes appellantur' ('*Genus* is so-called from giving birth and generating or from the stipulation of a number of those who have been born, just like *nationes* which are set apart through internal kinship relations and are called *gentes*'). The claims of etymology aside, Isidore saw peoples as self-defined groups reproducing themselves through birth.

The curious classification of peoples, based on Tacitus's *Germania*, 2 but dating from c. 520, which views the western peoples as the descendants of three brothers, Erminus, Inguo, and Istio, is not Frankish and is now believed to have an originally Byzantine provenance: see Walter Goffart, 'The Supposedly "Frankish" Table of Nations: An Edition and Study', in *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 17 (1983), 98–130 (repr. in his *Rome's Fall and After* (London, 1989), pp. 133–65).

⁹⁶ Most of the tales are brought together in Murray, *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul*, nos 78–102. Fredegar's interest in stories extended well beyond the Frankish realm.

credulity to fancy.⁹⁷ They missed Wenskus's 'gentile' tradition because it was not there. Their solution to the problem of Frankish origins was, we would now recognize, an invention designed to overcome the deficiencies in the historical record and cultural traditions of the Merovingian kingdom and to expand the horizons of Frankish origins. These deficiencies have not somehow or another been made up by the passage of time. Wenskus's model of ethnic development, despite its learning, is no less an invention designed to overcome the same deficiencies and to integrate the study of Germanic antiquity into the prevailing scholarly conventions of his day.

V

In 1907 Hector Munro Chadwick wrote *The Origin of the English Nation*. From that time to the present, his ideas have percolated through the thinking of English-language medievalists concerned with both insular and continental social and cultural history.⁹⁸ Many of his views, though by no means all, have insinuated themselves rather quietly among the standard features of the scholarly landscape. The implications of his work have been debated, even in recent times.⁹⁹ In 1961 Reinhard Wenskus wrote *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, relying upon very similar ideas.¹⁰⁰ It too was about the origins

⁹⁷ The one instance where court influence may well be detected in Fredegar, the etymological tale of Merovech's conception (*Chron.*, III 9), points to Roman not Germanic tradition, and not to authentic myth, but to learned rhetorical conceit: see Murray, 'Post vocantur Mero-hingii', pp. 146–68.

⁹⁸ As far as I know, the intellectual background of Chadwick's ideas has not been investigated, and unfortunately Chadwick was a member of that ample tribe of British scholars which finds historiography a distraction. Some sources could very well lie in French scholarship and in older German ideas about *retinues* that most of Chadwick's contemporaries thought had been superseded; for example, Eichhorn (as at n. 39 above) regarded *Gefolgschaften* as a basis of tribal formation, especially in frontier areas.

It is interesting to note that J. B. Bury, the noted classicist, was lecturing in Cambridge at the same time as Chadwick and telling his students that in late imperial times the Germanic state outside the frontiers 'might have a king or it might not, but in either case it was virtually a democracy' in which the people were sovereign (J. B. Bury, *The Invasion of Europe by the Barbarians* (London, 1928; repr. New York, 1967), p. 12). Bury nevertheless perfectly well realized the composite nature of the peoples appearing in late imperial sources.

⁹⁹ Richard Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Berkeley, 1988), pp. 3–4, 25, 27–28, may not be the most recent work to invoke Chadwick, but it is notable for its appeal also to the German theory of the king's free (pp. 20–21).

¹⁰⁰ An indirect encounter with Chadwick occurs in *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* (p. 75 n. 387) where T. G. E. Powell, *The Celts* (London, 1958), is the target of some misdirected criticism. Powell briefly summarizes Chadwick's views as established opinion, without bothering to cite their author (p. 52).

of a nation. *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* was immediately hailed as a milestone in German scholarship.¹⁰¹ Subsequent apotheosis elevated Wenskus's ideas, and often not the better ones, into a model of ethnic development that was promoted in an increasingly competitive international academic world as a revolutionary new approach to the history of the European peoples and their ethnic development.¹⁰² Wenskus deployed ideas current in recent works of German social science but these were adapted to an historiographical framework remarkable for its adherence to traditional modes of philological history and a vulgar theme of German history: the creative, dynamic role of the Germanic *Urheimat* in shaping Europe's destiny. In nineteenth-century scholarship, the north-German homeland was seen as furnishing through national migrations the legal and institutional foundations of modern European history. In the increasingly racist and racist theories of the late nineteenth and twentieth century, it provided the superior aesthetic and religious sensibilities of advanced culture and supplied the European peoples with their creative ruling classes that brought regional cultures to the apogees of their development. In Wenskus's version of the model, stripped of race and belligerent nationalism, and largely bereft of institutions, the *Urheimat* was the source for the concepts of *Gentilismus* and *Traditionskerne*, understood as the bearers of the creative, if often scarcely rational, forces of ethnic political thinking.

The *Traditionskern* idea will always elude demonstration and refutation. Like the conveniently cremated bones of the Nordic race in prewar prehistory, it leaves no trace. It is unattested in sources: the evidence for it is always indirect — splinters of tradition, allegedly masked by a cultural setting far removed in time, and often in place, from the origins that supposedly gave them birth, or buried in the meanings of words dispossessed of context. Whether Wenskus's concepts will appear at all stylish decked out according to the current vogue for Pierre Bourdieu's sociology or the like, only time will tell. One may be foolhardy to predict the vicissitudes of fashion, but I would be surprised if they find lasting appeal even in their own *Urheimat*.

¹⁰¹ The word 'milestone' was used by the prehistorian Hachmann (as at n. 46 above); his criticism of the book, however, is devastating. The cryptic review by Wallace-Hadrill (*English Historical Review*, 79 (1964), 137–39) is hardly a hurrah. By modern lights, the reviewer got the wrong message, seeing the kernel of the study as the proto-history of the Germanic peoples: 'To the general historian, the main interest of this may well lie in the author's frank admission that disentangling Germans from Germans is sometimes less difficult than disentangling Germans from Celts. It is the Celts and not the Romans who emerge as the first architects of modern "Germanentum."' (This is not an unreasonable reading.) Regarding the role of *Gefolgschaften*, 'Dr. Wenskus's conclusion is not out of line with modern German views on the matter.' Anglo-Saxonists are directed to his *Traditionskern* theory 'for a general lesson' on the constitution of a people.

¹⁰² The campaign goes on: Patrick Geary's advertising note to Wolfram's *Roman Empire and Its Barbarian Peoples* suggests that the synthesis it contains 'could bring about a sea change in how contemporary Western society understands its relationship to the past'.

Nation versus Army: A Necessary Contrast?

MICHAEL KULIKOWSKI

For so young a neologism, ethnogenesis has travelled far since Herwig Wolfram first brought the theories of Reinhard Wenskus to an international scholarly audience.¹ Like one of its barbarian *gentes*, the *Traditionskern* of ethnogenesis theory has emerged from its middle European cradle and wandered, crossing Alps, Pyrenees, and English Channel.² As it has travelled, so has the constellation of those

¹ Wenskus's *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* appeared in 1961, the first edition of Wolfram's *Geschichte der Goten* (Munich) in 1979. Their ideas made an immediate impact on Spain through the work of Luis A. García Moreno, e.g. 'La invasión del 409 en España: nuevas perspectivas desde el punto de vista germano', in *Ejército y Sociedad*, ed. by A. del Castillo (León, 1982), pp. 63–86; idem, *Historia de España visigoda* (Madrid, 1989); idem, 'Gothic Survivals in the Visigothic Kingdoms of Toulouse and Toledo', *Francia*, 21.1 (1994), 1–15. A student of García Moreno has since reproduced the ideas of Wenskus and Wolfram at inordinate length in Spanish: Javier Pampliega, *Los germanos en España* (Madrid, 1998). By contrast, the standard French textbook, Michel Kazanski, *Les Goths* (Paris, 1993), is cautious. American scholars were first introduced to Wolfram's ideas by the very favourable presentation they received in Geary, *Before France and Germany*, pp. 39–75, and since Thomas J. Dunlap's translation of Wolfram's book appeared in 1988 (Wolfram, *History of the Goths*), his theories have been ubiquitous.

² The use of the term 'barbarian' is deliberate and surely non-pejorative. It is to be preferred programmatically to the noun 'German' and the adjective 'Germanic'. 'Germans' and 'Germanic peoples' are the legacy of nineteenth-century philology; the usage posits community and ethnicity on the basis of shared language. But we know that before the Carolingian era, language was not regarded as a sign of ethnic distinction (Pohl, 'Telling the Difference'), while late antique authors

attached to the *Traditionskern* changed, larger in some places, smaller in others, as garrisons are left behind or momentary enthusiasts fall away. Unlike the barbarians it studies, however, ethnogenesis theory has managed to cross the Atlantic, and indeed the South Pacific, hence the present volume. The analogy is only partly facetious: it is a rare and wondrous thing when an academic construct supplies the metaphor for its own success.³ Like any scholarly success story, ethnogenesis theory has succeeded in part because of its inclusiveness. The canonical works of Wenskus and Wolfram are strategically vague in many places, a fact that allows exegetes and acolytes a great deal of scope for adding their own fillips and flourishes to the superstructure of the theory.⁴ Given this leeway, it is perhaps not surprising that different national cultures of scholarship have tended to focus on different aspects of an increasingly baroque ethnogenesis theory.⁵ The present paper begins from the problem of nation versus army because it has been central to the Anglophone discourse on ethnogenesis and holds up a mirror to the whole of the current debate.

This debate stems from the need to come to grips with the defects of our sources, all of which show us the barbarians through the prism of an *interpretatio romana*.⁶ That

did not include in their definition of Germans many groups which modern scholars, working in the shadow of philology, freely so classify. (See, in the most recent instance, the volume of excerpted sources edited by Hans-Werner Goetz and Karl-Wilhelm Welwei, *Altes Germanien: Auszüge aus den antiken Quellen über die Germanen und ihre Beziehungen zum römischen Reich: Quellen der alten Geschichte bis zum Jahre 238 n. Chr.*, 2 vols (Darmstadt, 1995). Similarly, Pohl, *Germanen*, explicitly excludes the Goths and Vandals from the *Germani* he is meant to be treating, before proceeding to retail their history at length.) One of the great virtues of recent studies of ethnogenesis has been to show the malleability of early medieval ethnicity and, consequently, to force us to regard with scepticism all claims to natural ethnic community while looking for the strategies by which such communities are socially constructed. To use the term 'Germanic' as a collective adjective (as is done by nearly every scholar involved in the debate, e.g. Wolfram, *History of the Goths*; Pohl, 'Telling the Difference'; Heather, *Goths and Romans*; idem, *Goths*; but not Amory, *People and Identity*, following Walter Goffart, 'Rome, Constantinople and the Barbarians', *AHR*, 86 (1981), 275–306; idem, 'Germanic Antiquity Today') is to perpetuate precisely the same misapprehensions that the entire debate was begun in order to eliminate.

³ For success it has been: in the US, ethnogenesis now appears in Western Civilization textbooks, the bellwether genre for trickle-down scholarship.

⁴ The vagueness extends to documentation and Wolfram's footnotes are open to the charges on which Leo indicted von Ranke nearly two centuries ago (see Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge, MA, 1997), pp. 64–67).

⁵ Geary, 'Barbarians and Ethnicity', is a masterly synthesis of recent approaches that others might have found contradictory.

⁶ Many think that the *Getica* of Jordanes forms an exception to this rule. Others, the present author among them, do not, but in the Jordanes debate, ritual declamation has long since replaced dialogue. Until some common ground on which to discuss Jordanes is found, the cautious

is, regardless of the origins and even the self-perceptions of the authors, their writings belong to a classical, Graeco-Roman literary tradition.⁷ They all view their various barbarian collectivities as *gentes* or *ethne*, the Latin and Greek not quite synonymous but close enough, and assume that differences between groups of people derive from differences in their ancestry.⁸ The recent debate on ethnicity has shown that this cannot have been so, no matter how consistent our sources are in describing barbarian groups as large, integrated communities of descent.⁹ Anthropology has shown that ethnicity determined strictly by biology is impossible and, armed with this awareness, historians have demonstrated how unstable and fissiparous barbarian groups could be and usually were.¹⁰ Whatever it was that bound them together, it was not biological community, and we can never now return to the old racial conceptions of barbarian ethnicity which underpinned discussion from the dawn of modern scholarship.¹¹ Instead, recent debate

historian will reserve judgement entirely. Apart from Jordanes, I know of only one claim for a barbarian voice from antiquity, viz. the bizarre assertion of Hans J. Hummer, 'The Fluidity of Barbarian Identity, the Ethnogenesis of Alemanni and Suebi, AD 200–500', *Early Medieval Europe*, 7 (1998), 1–27 (p. 8 n. 27), that 'Ammianus' observations take the reader beyond the *interpretatio romana* into the barbarian world'.

⁷ This, an important subtext of Amory, *People and Identity*, is surely correct, though the author goes too far in equating the commonplaces of ethnographic literature with ethnographic ideas 'in the air'.

⁸ This assumption does not make their vocabulary unsophisticated. One has only to read Themistius or Claudian or the *Historia Augusta* to see how ethnic vocabulary was manipulated to include and exclude both in the political present and in the representation of the past. In fact, the power of this language to shape contemporary affairs and to rewrite the memory of past events was rooted in a worldview that understood collective groups to derive their sense of community from descent. That is, if in the natural order of things political community was identical with community of descent, then one could represent those who deviate from this norm as unnatural, a polemical weapon of great strength.

⁹ Note that Peter Heather, 'Disappearing and Reappearing Tribes', in *Strategies of Distinction*, pp. 105–11, wishes to revive a biological approach to ethnicity.

¹⁰ Susan Reynolds ('Medieval *Origines gentium* and the Community of the Realm', *History*, 68 (1983), 375–90; eadem, *Kingdoms and Communities* (Oxford, 1984); and eadem, 'Our Forefathers? Tribes, Peoples and Nations in the Historiography of the Age of Migrations', in *After Rome's Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History, Essays Presented to Walter Goffart*, ed. by Alexander Callander Murray (Toronto, 1998), pp. 17–36) demonstrates how powerful the idea, though not necessarily the reality, of biological kinship was to medieval secular communities of all sorts. Reynolds's work on the high Middle Ages has been insufficiently observed by students of the barbarians, but the parallels are significant and Reynolds's pragmatism is perhaps a better way to examine the past than the theory-driven approach of ethnogenesis.

¹¹ This is not to deny the continuing value of many older works written with these assumptions. Ludwig Schmidt, *Geschichte der deutschen Stämme: Die Ostgermanen*, 2nd edn (Munich,

has been an attempt to come to terms with the assumptions of our sources and get behind them to find the true meaning of barbarian ethnicity.

Allowing for a great many variations, there have been three main approaches. The first is that of the canonical Viennese texts, which see barbarian groups as more or less heterogeneous save for a small, though always unspecified, number of elite families who bear the *Traditionskern* of a genuine ethnic memory. Successful military leadership on the part of these noble lineages attracts followers like a snowball rolling down a hillside, until under the right circumstances, usually those of settlement, there takes place an ethnogenesis in which the core of tradition carried by its noble bearers is widely adopted and subsumes the previously heterogeneous identities of the non-noble following.¹² In reaction to this canonical approach to ethnogenesis, a neo-Romantic revisionism is now

1938); idem, *Geschichte der deutschen Stämme: Die Westgermanen*, 2nd edn (Munich, 1940); and Émilienne Demougeot, *De l'unité à la division de l'empire romain* (Paris, 1951), for example, retain permanent value.

¹² By far the most accessible introduction to the canonical approach is to be found in Herwig Wolfram, *Die Germanen* (Munich, 1995), very much a summary of Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*. One passage sums up every main contention of the continental teaching: 'Wann immer in den Quellen ein antikes oder frühmittelalterliches Volk auftritt, so besteht es aus vielen Völkern, die in einem Heer zusammengefaßt sind. Die erfolgreichste Führungsgruppe dieser Völker bildet [...] den "Traditionskern," der sich gleichsam als Abstammungsgemeinschaft aus Überlieferung versteht. Solange Traditionskerne erfolgreich sind, geben sie den Anstoß zur Bildung, Abspaltung und Umbildung von Völkern. Die gentile Überlieferung ist die Kunde von den Taten tapferer Männer' (Wolfram, *Germanen*, pp. 10–11). The last contention illustrates the way in which Viennese ethnogenesis theory has striven to salvage the main tenets of prewar German scholarship (exemplified by Walter Schlesinger, 'Heerschaft und Gefolgschaft in der germanisch-deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 176 (1953), 225–75; the English translation in *Lordship and Community in Medieval Europe*, ed. by F. L. Cheyette (New York, 1968) omits vital documentation) which consistently emphasized the power of divinely sanctioned kings and nobles as the motivating forces of 'Germanic' society. This focus on *Heerkönigtum* as the engine for ethnogenesis has been central to American variants of ethnogenesis theory, especially Geary, 'Ethnic Identity as a Situational Construct', pp. 22–24: 'under arms, the relationship between leaders and their peoples became more conscious'; see also Geary, *Before France and Germany*, pp. 50–57. The nation versus army problem is derived directly from one strand in this approach, the relationship of the *Traditionskerne* to *Heerkönigtum*; see especially J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops: Army, Church, and State in the Age of Arcadius and Chrysostom* (Oxford, 1990); idem, 'Alaric's Goths: Nation or Army?', in *Fifth-Century Gaul*, pp. 75–83. Much subsequent work in English has been a reaction against Liebeschuetz, whether positive (e.g. Thomas S. Burns, *Barbarians within the Gates of Rome* (Bloomington, 1996)) or negative (e.g. Heather, *Goths*). Bowlus, 'Ethnogenesis Models', and Goffart, 'Germanic Antiquity Today', are the only two critiques of ethnogenesis which manage to avoid arguing within the terms of debate fixed by the Viennese school.

flourishing: this pays lip service to identity as a situational construct, but insists that barbarian ethnicity was a stable identity, self-perceived and spread widely through a broad class of warrior freemen who thought of themselves as Goths or Vandals or whatever.¹³ Both the Viennese and the neo-Romantic approaches, though ostensibly diametrically opposed to each other, have one vital consequence in common: both allow their proponents to salvage cherished narrative topoi, from migrations out of a Scandinavian womb of nations to elaborate, arrow-strewn maps depicting the invaders' paths.¹⁴

¹³ See especially Heather, *Goths*. The author opens with an approving citation of Henry Bradley, *The Story of the Goths: From the Earliest Times to the End of the Gothic Dominion in Spain*, *The Story of the Nations*, 18 (New York, 1888), with whom he manifests a clear methodological affinity throughout.

¹⁴ Thus Heather, *Goths and Romans*, p. 212, can still say that the Goths 'invaded Italy in search of a new homeland'. Both the ethnogenesis-theory and neo-Romantic approaches are systematically committed to an archaic view of the interaction of historical and archaeological evidence, the so-called ethnic ascription approach, which assumes that artefacts and archaeologically observable rituals carry ethnicity, so that historical sources can be correlated to archaeological finds and confirmed, denied, or improved upon thereby. The most prolific synthesist of barbarian archaeological evidence, Volker Bierbrauer, on whom most historians rely for their archaeological data, is unremittingly committed to this approach (see e.g. 'Archäologie und Geschichte der Goten vom 1.–7. Jahrhundert: Versuch einer Bilanz', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 28 (1994), 51–171 with references to his vast bibliography; idem, 'Die Goten vom 1.–7. Jahrhundert n. Chr.: Siedelgebiete und Wanderbewegungen aufgrund archäologischer Quellen', *Peregrinatio Gothica*, 2 (1992), 9–43 which purports to locate the moment of Gothic ethnogenesis on the basis of archaeology). Pohl, *Germanen*, accepts Bierbrauer's approach throughout. The synthetic treatment of Kazanski, *Goths* (which incorporates and supersedes the treatment of idem, 'Contribution à l'étude des migrations des Goths à la fin du IV^e et au V^e siècles: la temoignage de l'archéologie', in *Gallo-Romains, Wisigoths et Francs en Aquitaine, Septimanie et Espagne*, ed. by Patrick Perin (Rouen, 1991), pp. 11–25) is vitiated by similar assumptions, as are the many technical contributions in *L'armée et les barbares du III^e au VII^e siècle*, ed. by Françoise Vallet and Michel Kazanski (Paris, 1993). The same problem afflicts two otherwise very interesting pieces, Przemyslaw Urbanczyk, 'The Goths in Poland: Where Did They Come From and When Did They Leave?', *European Journal of Archaeology*, 1 (1998), 397–415, and the attempt at post-processual ethnoarchaeology in Kevin Greene, 'Gothic Material Culture', in *Archaeology as Long-Term History*, ed. by Ian Hodder (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 117–31. One must also contend with still more antediluvian approaches which equate archaeological data with palaeoanthropological, linguistic, and literary evidence to plot the movement of ancient races. This approach, which dates back to Kossina at the turn of the century (on which see especially Veit, 'Ethnic Concepts in German Prehistory', and the contribution by Curta in this volume), is especially prevalent amongst scholars trained in the Soviet tradition: see e.g. Vera B. Kovalevskaja, 'La présence alano-sarmate en Gaule: confrontation des données archéologiques, paléanthropologiques, historiques et toponymiques', in *L'armée et les barbares*, pp. 209–23.

By contrast, a third approach allows for none of this and presents barbarian ethnic identity as not just a situational construct but as a construct so evanescent as to be a will-o-the-wisp, available for the using as individuals found it worthwhile to do so.¹⁵

These three approaches and their variants represent the most clearly articulated positions in the present discourse on barbarian ethnicity. Fundamentally incompatible with one another, all three approaches nevertheless share one assumption: they all believe that though our sources distort barbarian reality, we can get behind their words to discover what barbarian collectivities were really like. But that might not be the case. The dichotomy of this paper's title asks whether the barbarian groups we meet in our sources were mobile armies or groups of farming families on the move, a question one often finds in the recent literature. Different scholars provide different answers, but what we really need to ask is whether we can tell. In the absence of fieldwork conducted via time machine, can we hope to understand barbarian anthropology? It is a difficult question to answer in the affirmative. On the other hand, we *can* study barbarian activity. By their actions, as the Bible tells us, ye shall know them. If we put aside preconceived conceptual frameworks, whether our own or those of our sources, and look only at the barbarian activity they record, there is a real prospect of being able to answer

It is an unfortunate fact, however, that historical and material sources are different categories of evidence that *never* intersect with the precision assumed by historians seeking the assistance of archaeological evidence. Recent theoretical approaches to the archaeology of ethnicity suggest as much. Sebastian Brather, 'Ethnische Identitäten als Konstrukte der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie', *Germania*, 78 (2000), 139–77, and Stephen Shennan, 'Introduction: Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity', in Shennan (ed.), *Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity*, pp. 1–32, should be read by every historian of the barbarians before he or she attempts to introduce archaeological evidence into a discussion. Unfortunately, many archaeologists who in theory reject the ethnic ascription of material evidence do not follow through in practice: Kazimierz Godlowski, 'Germanische Wanderungen im 3. Jh. v.Chr.–6. Jf. n.Chr. und ihre Widerspiegelung in den historischen und archäologischen Quellen', *Peregrinatio Gothica*, 3 (1993), 53–75. Meanwhile, Falko Daim, 'Archaeology, Ethnicity and the Structures of Identification: The Example of the Avars, Carantanians and Moravians in the Eighth Century', in *Strategies of Distinction*, pp. 71–93 (which builds upon idem, 'Gedanken zum Ethnosbegriff', *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien*, 112 (1982), 58–71) demonstrates the difficulties with even the most cautious use of material evidence in the discussion of historical ethnicity: as soon as the author moves from the discussion of ideal approaches regarding archaeological evidence to the specifics of middle Danubian sites, ethnic-ascription vocabulary immediately resurfaces. See further the contributions of Brather and Fehr in this volume.

¹⁵ Amory, *People and Identity*, using the case of the Italian Ostrogoths as his illustration. Though the author presents himself as working in the tradition of Wenskus and Wolfram, his presentation of their ideas shows considerably more clarity and modernity of expression than do the originals. Geary, 'Ethnic Identity as a Situational Construct', would seem to have been a stronger influence.

questions about what barbarian groups were like. Let us, by way of experiment, take a few examples.

The Tervingi and Greuthungi who crossed the Danube in 376 are known to us almost exclusively from Ammianus, who clearly conceived both groups as communities of descent, substantially identical to the Tervingi and Greuthungi whom he had previously described in their realms beyond the Danube.¹⁶ He tells us that in 376 both Tervingi and Greuthungi petitioned Valens for admission to the empire, and the emperor, from Antioch, agreed to admit the former group but not the latter. The terms of the agreement are broadly known: the Tervingi promised to keep the peace and perform military service, in return for which they would receive stockpiled grain immediately and land in Thrace after their immediate needs had been supplied.¹⁷ Neither the conceptual framework nor the logistics of this agreement are known to us.¹⁸ Indeed, apart from the bare fact of this treaty, we know very little about the Tervingi, only that they were armed, because our Roman sources expected that they would be disarmed.¹⁹

¹⁶ For Ammianus, the Tervingi of 376 under Alavivus and Fritigern were the larger part of the Tervingi whom Athanaric had until recently ruled collectively, while the Greuthungi led by Alatheus and Saphrax were the whole of the Greuthungian subjects of the recent suicide Ermanaric. The status of Athanaric and Ermanaric, which is a matter of enormous controversy, need not concern us here.

¹⁷ Tervingian terms: Amm. Marc. XXXI 4.1; Roman terms: XXXI 4.5, 8.

¹⁸ Orosius, *Hist.*, VII 33.10 claims that no treaty was made, but this may be extrapolation from the course of events. The debate over the *foedus* of 376, and the argument over the intended status of the Tervingian refugees (*coloni*, *laeti*, *dediticii*, *foederati*, etc.), pursued by e.g. Emilienne Demougeot, 'À propos des lètes gaulois du IV^e siècle', in *Festschrift für F. Altheim*, 2 vols (Berlin, 1970), II, 101–13; eadem, 'Modalités d'établissement des fédérés barbares de Gratien et de Théodose', in *Mélanges d'histoire offerts à William Seston* (Paris, 1974), pp. 143–60; Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, pp. 117–19; Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pp. 123–28; and Maria Cesa, 'Römisches Heer und barbarische Föderaten', *L'armée et les barbares*, pp. 21–29, is fundamentally pointless: our sources are not adequate to resolve it and modern definitions of the terms *laetus*, *dediticius*, and *foederatus* must rely upon the defective evidence of *comparanda*, which makes a great many such debates circular. By contrast, and despite his enthusiastic contribution to these debates, Heather, *Goths and Romans*, p. 128, is quite right to state that what really matters is 'the fact that neither Valens nor the Tervingi were committed to making their new relationship work'.

¹⁹ Eunapius, frag. 42 (Müller) = 42 (Blockley), Zosimus IV 20.6, Jerome, *Chronicon*, in *Eusebius Werke* 17: *Die Chronik des Hieronymus*, ed. by R. Helm (Berline, 1956), *sub anno* 377, Orosius, *Hist.*, VII 33.10, all imply the intention of a Gothic disarmament which was not, in the event, possible. Amm. Marc. XXXI 4.9 speaks of 'columns of armed barbarians' crossing the frontier, without discussing the possibility of their disarmament. The argument of Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pp. 124–25, that there was never any real intention of disarming the Goths, rests not so much on these sources, which are quite explicit, as on the author's definition of a *deditio*.

Nothing in this meagre harvest allows us to speculate about the organization or social composition of these barbarians.²⁰ Armed they were, but that does not make them a mobile army, any more than the promise of stockpiled grain makes them soldiers in receipt of the *annona*, or the promise of land makes them migratory farmers and their families.

After the Danube crossing, we continue to know little more than the bare course of events. The Tervingi were exploited by local commanders, and the mobilization of Roman troops, in order to supervise the Tervingian move to Marcianople, allowed the Greuthungi also into the empire.²¹ Open revolt followed on attempted murder and kidnapping under flag of truce.²² The rebels were denied access to food, and soon both Valens and Gratian were persuaded that the problem needed permanent solution.²³ The battle of Adrianople ensued. In all this, the composition of the Tervingi and Greuthungi remains unremittingly obscure. We meet them only on the battlefield or at the negotiating table. Their leaders were fighters like Fritigern, but if he led an army, then it was a fractious, undisciplined, and even mutinous force with nothing resembling a chain of command.²⁴ We may be sure that the logistics of housing and feeding those involved will have been a critical point, but we cannot know what those logistics were.²⁵ And without knowing what the logistics were, we cannot tell how Fritigern's following was organized, how its members related to one another, what relationship they bore to their leaders, how many non-combatants marched with them, or how they cared for those non-combatants. We might well suppose that a barbarian army playing cat-and-mouse with the emperor's field army would have looked no different than a migrating conglomeration of kin groups fighting for their lives on hostile territory. But the only certainty is that enough men under arms followed Fritigern to have achieved the victory at Adrianople.²⁶

²⁰ To refer to the Tervingi and Greuthungi as refugees only introduces unfortunate modern parallels. The impetus for the arrival of both groups may ultimately have been defeat by the Huns, but neither the communications nor the transportation of Late Antiquity could produce the results of a modern war. No Huns are known to have operated on the Danube until a quarter century after 376, and the Tervingi and Greuthungi were in no immediate danger.

²¹ Amm. Marc. XXXI 4.11; 5.1–3.

²² Kidnapping: Amm. Marc. XXXI 5.5.

²³ Food shortages: Amm. Marc. XXXI 8.1, which as Heather, *Goths and Romans*, p. 132, notes was probably part of a strategy going back to 376.

²⁴ Heather, *Goths and Romans*, p. 180.

²⁵ We do know that Fritigern built and defended for quite some time a camp at *oppidum Salices*, which is probably not Ad Salices in the Dobrudja but rather, as Amm. Marc. XXXI 8.1 tells us, a site near Marcianople otherwise unattested. Fritigern's *oppidum* had ramparts and was thus an entrenched position, but again, this is not evidence for the composition of his followers.

²⁶ Barbarian numbers are a matter of perennial dispute: Amm. Marc. XXXI 12.3 has Valens march into battle at Adrianople expecting to meet about ten thousand Goths under Fritigern; the emperor was soon undeceived, though we do not know how many additional soldiers the arrival

We learn little more from that battle's aftermath: the appointment of Theodosius, the inconclusive Balkan campaigns of that emperor, and the eventual treaty of 382. The terms of that treaty are debatable. Synesius claims that the Goths were given lands; Themistius echoes the standard biblical topos of swords being beaten into ploughshares; Pacatus claims the Goths became farmers.²⁷ All of this is boiler-plate rhetoric, that would soon become absolutely routine in describing any agreement with barbarians. Attempts to locate the settlement or describe its mechanisms are sheer conjecture.²⁸ All

of the Greuthungi brought. We traditionally discount the notices of barbarian numbers given in our sources, but one ought to take note of the recent work by Bernard S. Bachrach, 'Early Medieval Military Demography: Some Observations on the Methods of Hans Delbrück', in *The Circle of War in the Middle Ages: Essays on Medieval Military and Naval History*, ed. by D. J. Kagay and L. J. A. Villalon (Rochester, 1999), pp. 3–20, that locates the cause of this habit in Delbrück's *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 2nd edn (Berlin, 1923) and shows that its methodological justification is flawed. While Bachrach does not actually make the case for taking the sources at their word, he does effectively show that we need to re-examine our reasons for not doing so.

²⁷ Synesius, *De Regno*, XXI, in *Synesii Cyrenensis opuscula*, ed. by Nicolaus Terzaghi (Rome, 1944); Themistius 16, 34; Pacatus, *Pan. Lat.*, XII (I).22.3, but the reference to military service at XII (II).32.4 need not necessarily refer to the agreement of 382.

²⁸ E.g. Bernard Bachrach, 'Grand Strategy in the Germanic Kingdoms: Recruitment of the Rank and File', in *L'armée et les barbares*, pp. 55–63; Ralph W. Mathisen and Hagith S. Sivan, 'Forging a New Identity: The Kingdom of Toulouse and the Frontiers of Visigothic Aquitania, 418–507', in *The Visigoths: Studies in Culture and Society*, ed. by Alberto Ferreiro (Leiden, 1998), pp. 1–62 (p. 11), on the social hierarchy of the treaty Goths; Geary, 'Barbarians and Ethnicity', p. 119, on the location and tax basis of the settlement; or Heather, *Goths and Romans*, p. 159, who not only tells us where the Goths were settled, but states categorically that 'Gothic tribal life continued *de facto* and probably also *de jure*', as if we knew what 'Gothic tribal life' meant, let alone whether or how it continued. The rhetorical assertion of Synesius, *De regno*, XIX 43.5 that Goths continued to live by their own customs (not, incidentally, cited by Heather, *Goths and Romans*) is the only possible proof text and it is insufficient. Even if we discount the notion of sustained 'Gothic tribal life' as a chimera, we do no better by maintaining that Gratian and Theodosius were in 382 forced to recognize the Gothic settlement as semi-autonomous. The sources tell us nothing of the sort, nor must we infer as much from the difficulties of 395 — the fact that in that year Alaric is first met leading an organized group of Goths which the sources equate with the Goths of the 382 treaty does not mean that the independence and autonomy he enjoyed had been shared by his predecessors of the 380s and 390s, assuming he had any.

Equally contentious is the proposition that the Goths paid, or were at least meant to pay, taxes (made by Heather, *Goths and Romans*, conjecturally on p. 159, as proven fact on p. 176): the reference to Goths performing public liturgies in Themistius 16 is suggestive but ambiguous.

Similar problems attend the discussion of Gothic leadership at the time of the treaty and indeed for the thirteen following years up to 395. It is true that Fritigern, Alatheus, and Saphrax are nowhere mentioned at the time of the treaty and are not positively attested after 379/380. The

we know is that, in 382, those who had been up in arms ceased to be and the Gothic threat was regarded by contemporaries as having been defused. Thereafter, some Goths were formed up into regular units of the eastern field army. Others served in the campaigns that Theodosius led against the western usurpers Maximus and Eugenius, but there is no special reason to think that they did so under the terms of the treaty of 382.²⁹ Indeed, only during the campaign against Eugenius can we be certain that we are dealing with at least some of the Goths pacified in 382, and none of our evidence is particularly enlightening about their social composition. The result of the peace does not prove that the Goths had been seeking land to farm all along or that, having got it, they were not still capable of military action. Land grants suggest migrating families no more than demobilized soldiers, and indeed farming and soldiering were always complementary roles in the Roman world.³⁰

hypothesis that they were killed or otherwise eliminated during the campaigns of Gratian and Theodosius is quite probable, though unprovable. To go beyond this statement, however, is to pile up speculation in the midst of an evidential void. It is just as methodologically unsound to postulate the immediate succession in 380 of Alaric, the next Gothic leader positively attested (the position taken by Wolfram and Wenskus), as it is to claim that until 395 the Goths had no important leaders because the treaty of 382 had as a matter of policy eliminated any position of overall authority amongst the new settlers (so Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pp. 173–74).

²⁹ Units of the regular army are attested by *Not. dig., Or.*, V 61, VI 61, and probably reflect the situation of 394 (but compare the incompatible conclusions of Peter Brennan, 'The *Notitia Dignitatum*', in *Les littératures techniques dans l'antiquité romaine*, Entretiens Hardt, 42 (Geneva, 1995), pp. 147–78, and Michael Kulikowski, 'The *Notitia Dignitatum* as an Historical Source', *Historia*, 49 (2000), 358–77, on the utility of the *Notitia* as an historical source; see also Constantin Zuckerman, 'Comtes et ducs en Égypte autour de l'an 400 et la date de la *Notitia Dignitatum Orientis*', *Antiquité Tardive*, 6 (1999), 137–47 on the date). For the campaign against Maximus: Philostorgius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. by J. Bidez and F. Winkelman, 2nd edn (Berlin, 1972), X 8, Zosimus IV 45.3; for Eugenius: Orosius, *Hist.*, VII 35.19, Zosimus IV 57.2. The disturbances in the Balkans surrounding the Maximus campaign (Zosimus IV 45.3) have occasioned much debate. Some would see them as proof that the only barbarians that mattered were units of the Roman army (Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops*, p. 51); others would equate them with independent, or 'foreign', auxiliary units, raised from the Goths settled in 382 (Heather, *Goths and Romans*, p. 183). Both positions are special pleading to justify preconceived notions about barbarian ethnicity and barbarian integration. Zosimus is, as usual, too vague to allow us to decide the point. It is similarly impossible to discern the evidentiary basis of Bachrach, 'Grand Strategy', pp. 56–57, where the military services of the treaty Goths are defined with precise reference to Gothic numbers. For further inconclusive debate on the Balkan insurgency of the late 380s see Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pp. 184–86; Liebeschuetz, 'Alaric's Goths', p. 52; Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, pp. 137–38, but note that Claudian, *Get.*, 521–50 and *VI cons. Hon.*, 104–25 need not imply the involvement of Alaric in these campaigns.

³⁰ That farmers could quickly become soldiers and vice versa has become a commonplace since the seminal work of Ramsay Macmullen, *Soldier and Civilian in the Later Roman Empire*

The treaty of 382, and the events of the succeeding decade, are obscure — any reading of the exiguous sources will depend on prior assumptions about the nature of Gothic identity. On the other hand, we can be certain that contemporaries conceived these Goths as the progenitors of Alaric's following, which first appears in 395.³¹ Claudian is most explicit: Alaric's followers are a *gens*.³² Orosius introduces Alaric as one of the commanders in the war against Eugenius, but views Alaric's following as ethnically defined in the usual way. Zosimus, by contrast, is often taken to prove that Alaric's following was essentially a mobile army, though all he actually says is that Alaric revolted in 395 because he wanted a better command.³³ This tells us something about Alaric and his own ambitions, but nothing about those who followed him, and Zosimus consistently portrays Alaric's following as an *ethnos* thereafter. We are not, of course, obliged to believe this and probably should not, but we need to admit that the sources sanction no alternative reading. What we know about Alaric's own position is ambiguous, and, as we shall see, his actions are equally so.

There is no good reason to think that Alaric had an important position before the revolt of 395.³⁴ Whether he was a 'king' in the constitutional sense is a matter of endless and unnecessary controversy: the sources do not tell us.³⁵ In the absence of contemporary evidence, Jordanes's assertion that his membership of the Balth family gave him rightful predominance must be treated with extreme caution.³⁶ That Alaric consistently angled for Roman military office is likewise difficult evidence to use: whether we read his desire for a generalship as a way of legitimizing himself further within a Gothic following, or as the ambition of a man who was essentially a Roman soldier, depends upon our own previous assumptions, not upon the evidence. The only thing we cannot doubt is that contemporaries saw Alaric as a man who had served Rome but who was

(Cambridge, MA, 1963), but the observation is pointed up nicely in the present context: Themistius, who after 382 celebrates the alacrity with which Gothic swords are turned into ploughs (Themistius 16, composed late in 382 for the beginning of Saturninus's consulate of 383), had only three years earlier been praising Theodosius for turning farmers into soldiers to fight the Goths (Themistius 14, Spring 379).

³¹ Claudian, *Get.*, 166–248, 598–647; for the evidence of Synesius to the same effect, Peter Heather, 'The Anti-Scythian Tirade of Synesius', *Phoenix*, 42 (1988), 152–72 (pp. 154–55). Only the very late John of Antioch refers to Alaric's following by preference as Alarikoi.

³² Claudian: *IV cons. Hon.*, 474; *Get.*, 99, 134, 169, 533, 645–47.

³³ Zosimus V 5.4.

³⁴ Contra Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pp. 184, 195–96, but the connection he draws between the quarrel of Eriulph and Fravittas and the rise of Alaric is at least three steps removed from the evidence.

³⁵ See, e.g., Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, pp. 143–46; Heather, *Goths and Romans*, p. 198.

³⁶ Jordanes, *Getica*, 146. The long-standing importance of Alaric's Balth family is of course central to the canonical notion of *Traditionskerne*, e.g. Wolfram, *History of the Goths*; Geary, 'Barbarians and Ethnicity', p. 119.

also the leader of a community of descent, and indeed a community of descent derived from the settlers of 382.

As to its activities, Alaric's following was mobile. There is no need to rehearse his movements at length, but they were far-ranging and efficient, as the military facts confirm.³⁷ Alaric could not be defeated in open battle, even when Stilicho marched against him with the combined armies of east and west. Unless we are to accept ancient canards about Stilicho's treachery or blame dumb luck, Alaric's successes must be attributed either to force of numbers or to sheer military skill. On the other hand, both the numbers of the following and the extent of military skill were clearly limited and there was an explicit connection between the two factors. Alaric's following swelled and shrank in size, particularly in the early years of the fifth century. Thus, after the drawn battle at Pollentia in 402, numbers of his following sloped off into the night,³⁸ while after the death of Stilicho many barbarian troops in Italy deserted to Alaric, as did many slaves while he was camped outside Rome.³⁹

The shape of the group that followed Alaric was thus clearly subject to change, but we know practically nothing about the behaviour, accommodation, or supply of that following, whatever its size. From the very beginning, Alaric is portrayed as leading a wagon train large enough to encumber him.⁴⁰ Beyond this, we have only a highly stylized reference to the wives of his followers disporting themselves in the Balkan towns their husbands had conquered and Alaric's frequent demands for subventions of grain and gold.⁴¹ On one occasion, seemingly desperate for peace, he dropped his demands for gold and asked only for annual supplies of grain.⁴² Once before, and once on that same occasion, he asked for a place for himself and his followers to dwell.⁴³ We

³⁷ For the narrative, the best account in English is Alan Cameron, *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius* (Oxford, 1970).

³⁸ For the possibility that Pollentia was actually fought in 403 see T. D. Barnes, 'The Historical Setting of Prudentius' *contra Symmachum*', *American Journal of Philology*, 97 (1976), 373–86.

³⁹ The deserters of 408 had good reasons, their wives and children having been massacred (Zosimus V 35.5–6). Note that, *pace* Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pp. 213–14, there is absolutely no reason to view these troops as followers of Radagaisus recently incorporated into the army by Stilicho, or the Roman slaves as Gothic followers of Radagaisus sold into slavery upon his defeat. The assertions are stratagems that allow the author to claim the continued Gothic ethnicity of Alaric's following, since Radagaisus's followers had, after all, been Goths.

⁴⁰ Claudian, *Ruf.*, II 124–29; *IV cons. Hon.*, 466; *Stil.*, I 94–95.

⁴¹ Claudian, *Eutr.*, II 196–201. Subventions: Zosimus V 29.5–9; V 36.1–3. *Pace* Heather, *Goths and Romans*, p. 208, to state that Alaric led 'a whole people to trek across the Julian Alps' or that they were 'looking for a new area in which to settle' is to assume precisely that which must be proved.

⁴² Zosimus V 50.3.

⁴³ Zosimus V 48.3; V 50.3. Orosius, *Hist.*, VII 38 is too vague to mean much in this context.

lack, on the other hand, any references to billeting, to the actual supply of grain, to farm land, or indeed to all the other things that it would interest us very much to know. In other words, the record of their actions tells us nothing positive about the social structure of Alaric's following, only that it could both absorb and disgorge impressive numbers of people and still be perceived as fundamentally the same unit.

The history of Alaric's followers after his own death is not substantially more helpful. We have plenty of circumstantial detail about a few episodes, but we see almost nothing of the people led by Alaric's successors and what we do have does not allow for interpretation separate from our own presuppositions. The consecutive killings of Sarus, Athaulf, and Sergeric have a social meaning only if we make assumptions about what each man represented, and the same goes for Wallia's suppression of potential rivals.⁴⁴ As to the settlement of 418, the event that for many spurs the ethnogenesis of the Visigoths, every single aspect of it is open to several different interpretations.⁴⁵ If we could be sure that the settlers of 418 received shares of tax revenue rather than land, then that would indeed be suggestive of an army garrison, but however likely that scenario is for Ostrogothic Italy, it is unproven for Gaul.⁴⁶

Precisely the same ambiguities attend the evidence for the followings of Theoderic Strabo and Theoderic, son of Thiudimir, in the 480s. The sources describe them as communities of descent, but we can read the behaviour they describe either as that of an army or a people on the move.⁴⁷ By contrast with this Gothic evidence, the various

⁴⁴ E. A. Thompson, 'The Visigoths from Fritigern to Euric', *Historia*, 12 (1963), 105–26, is the classic reading of these deaths as meaningful social phenomena, though Heather, *Goths and Romans*, and idem, *Goths*, follow Thompson's lead with a new reading. Note that Philip Rousseau, 'Visigothic Migration and Settlement, 376–418: Some Excluded Hypotheses', *Historia*, 41 (1992), 345–61, should alert readers to the danger of placing more weight on the sources than they can reasonably be expected to bear.

⁴⁵ On which see Michael Kulikowski, 'Roman Identity and the Visigothic Settlement in Gaul', in *Culture and Society in Late Antique Gaul*, ed. by Ralph W. Mathisen and Danuta Shanzer (Aldershot, 2001), with full references.

⁴⁶ The case was famously made in Walter Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans AD 418–584: The Techniques of Accommodation* (Princeton, 1980), and has since been expanded by Jean Durliat, 'Le salaire de paix sociale dans les royaumes barbares (V^e–VI^e siècles)', in *Anerkennung und Integration*, ed. by Herwig Wolfram and Andreas Schwarcz, *Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Phil.-Hist. Klasse*, 193 (Vienna, 1988), pp. 20–72. It has been adopted by Herwig Wolfram, 'L'armée romaine comme modèle pour l'*exercitus barbarorum*', in *L'armée et les barbares*, pp. 13–15, and Geary, 'Barbarians and Ethnicity', p. 120, but the evidence is not good for the period before the 490s and one might be allowed a certain scepticism about whether an orderly and systematic technique of accommodation could exist in the unsettlingly novel conditions of the early fifth century.

⁴⁷ For the army version, see Amory, *People and Identity*, pp. 277–313, and Geary, 'Barbarians and Ethnicity', p. 122, drawing on the ambiguous attitudes of Wolfram, *History of the*

barbarians who invaded Gaul from across the Rhine in 406 present many fewer problems.⁴⁸ The sources are more or less united in attributing this invasion to Vandals, Alans, and Sueves, though Jerome produces a much longer display of ethnographic virtuosity. When these barbarians first appear, they are a potent military force and then after three years of silence there is further evidence for further violent devastations, both in the south of Gaul, whence a number of poetic accounts stem, and in Spain, where the highly coloured rhetoric of Hydatius describes a barbarian apocalypse. None of our evidence, however, tells us anything about the social composition of these barbarians. The sources assume a continuity between the invaders of 406 and the Vandals, Alans, and Sueves who settled in Spain in 411, just as they assume a continuity between the Vandal settlers of 411 and the people who followed Geiseric to Africa in 429. But apart from this last episode, more than twenty years after the Rhine crossing, and a biblical reference to barbarian farming in 413, we meet these barbarians only on the battlefield or in the act of plundering. These attestations, on the other hand, are by no means continuous. There are gaps of half a dozen years in the record and what Vandals, Alans, and Sueves did with themselves in the meantime is hidden from us. Much as one would like to fit the invaders of 406 into our understanding of barbarian social composition and barbarian ethnicity, we are constrained instead to confess our ignorance and move on.

The rehearsal of so much well-worn narrative has been intentional, because only the systematic presentation of the evidence, rather than selective citation, can underscore the full extent of its limitations: we have access to the barbarians only at those times of stress and violence when our Graeco-Roman sources felt barbarians needed mention, while even then we are condemned to see only what classical writers thought worthy of notice.⁴⁹ All the recent discussion of ethnogenesis has been an attempt to get behind the *interpretatio romana* of our sources to the barbarian reality within. But as the foregoing survey of barbarian activity illustrates, we cannot do this. The sources are not a distorting mirror between us and the barbarian past. They are an opaque barrier. In each case cited, the actions of our barbarian groups can be read either as the actions of a

Goths; for the migratory people, Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pp. 227–308; idem, *Goths*, pp. 151–78.

⁴⁸ Michael Kulikowski, 'Barbarians in Gaul, Usurpers in Britain', *Britannia*, 31 (2000), 325–45, redates the beginning of this invasion from 31 December 406 to 31 December 405, which places the substantive effects of the invasion in the year 406.

⁴⁹ And though we have archaeological evidence for settled agricultural life among barbarians beyond the *limes*, the anthropological conclusions we draw from this evidence cannot automatically be extended to those barbarians who moved around within the *limes* during the fourth and fifth centuries. The two categories of evidence simply do not intersect, and even archaeologists keen on the ethnic ascription of artefacts can deduce anthropological data only from settled communities and not from communities on the move. To go further than this requires recourse to the aprioristic application of anthropological models, as by Urbanczyk, 'Goths in Poland', pp. 403–04.

migrating people or as those of a wandering army. Which interpretation we choose depends upon our own presuppositions and what we want to find in our sources. Some have dismissed the nation/army problem as a false dichotomy, but it is not one.⁵⁰ The difficulty is that it is *our* dichotomy, rooted in conceptual categories that our sources do not share. If we are sufficiently wilful, we can make the sources resolve the dichotomy equally well either way. In practice this means that they do not resolve it at all.

The confusion here lies at the intersection of linguistics and cognition, as it does in most of the current debate on barbarian ethnicity and ethnogenesis. In discussing barbarian ethnicity, we use cognates and derivatives of the same words that our ancient sources used, but we do not use them the same way. Words for nation and army appear in our sources, but they are not the conceptual categories we try to make them. Our sources saw the barbarians as ethnic communities of descent and we can be sure that a lot of late Romans thought they knew a barbarian when they saw one: anti-barbarian pogroms were only possible because of that belief.⁵¹ On the other hand, our sources were not much interested in what ethnicity meant, or how it was manifested, or what precisely they were thinking about when they used ethnic language. Under such circumstances, our attempt to create a technical vocabulary from the resolutely non-technical usages of the past is an exercise in futility.

One does not like to finish by offering purely negative conclusions, nor is acknowledging our inability to get behind our sources necessarily a counsel of despair. There is a way forward, and that is to practise an intense pragmatism when it comes to the barbarian past. This means taking on its own terms whatever evidence we do have for each barbarian group: the sources will inevitably define the barbarian group as a community of descent, but we can study that group's behaviour, and perhaps explain it, without either accepting that definition or substituting another definition for it. Indeed this is precisely what most scholars already do when they move from the theoretical discussion of barbarian ethnicity to the narration of barbarian activity.⁵² The pragmatic approach can go further. Our sources not infrequently label individual barbarians as Goths or Vandals or Rugians or whatever. Sometimes the same individual gets labelled

⁵⁰ Heather, *Goths*.

⁵¹ If, as has recently been suggested, Ammianus closed a thirty-six-book history by endorsing the genocide of the Goths, he could do so because he believed that Goths could be recognized as such. See Amm. Marc. XXXI 16.8, with the commentary of T. D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca, 1998), pp. 184–86. For the enticing, if unprovable, argument that Ammianus wrote his history in thirty-six books, of which five are now lost while the extant eighteen are misnumbered, see *ibid.*, pp. 20–31.

⁵² One expects this from the neo-Romanticism of Heather, *Goths*, but it is striking how sharply the theoretical and narrative portions of Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, differ from one another in this respect. A still better example is that of Wood, 'Burgundians', an important contribution to the debate on ethnogenesis which finds no echo in the narrative of I. N. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–751* (London, 1994).

differently at different times.⁵³ We cannot dismiss this, or say that the sources did not really mean what they say. What we can do, however, is ask in every single instance what that ethnic identification meant in context, why ethnic comment was felt necessary, and whether it implies anything about either the individual or the circumstances in which the source found him.

This suggestion revolves around what cognitive scientists call adequacy of language.⁵⁴ That is, how do we find language plastic enough to describe all the variables of real world phenomena while still giving our discourse meaningful structure? In the case of barbarian ethnicity, the answer is that we do not, because we lack a coherent sample of barbarian social phenomena, and what we do have is mediated through a classical vocabulary that might reflect barbarian reality, but very probably does not. We must instead try to find the language adequate to describe and explain individual barbarians, specific barbarian groups, and their actions and interactions with the world around them. If we do this, we will lack the emotional satisfaction of knowing all that we want to know about the barbarian past. But we will be able to derive intellectual satisfaction from understanding the past within the framework of the possible, free from our own unconscious assumptions and wishful thinking.

⁵³ This is a key argument of Amory, *People and Identity*, who explores the evidence for the period 489 to 554 in his prosopographical appendix, pp. 348–486.

⁵⁴ See the suggestive programme of Israel Moysevich Gelfand, *Two Archetypes in the Psychology of Man: The 1989 Kyoto Prize Lecture* (Moscow, 1990), pp. 11–18.

Was Ethnicity Politicized in the Earliest Medieval Kingdoms?

ANDREW GILLETT

Modern scholars are familiar with the titles *rex Gothorum*, *rex Francorum*, *rex Langobardorum*, and others, designating the rulers of the western kingdoms. In ethnogenesis theory, these titles have been exploited as signs of a politicization of ethnicity: they are deemed to be assertions of competing claims to power, rooted in a new political rhetoric, an 'ethnic discourse' of power. But the evidence that can be collected for the titles of the early medieval rulers indicates that the key word in titulature was simply *rex* or *dominus*. Official use of formulae which include ethnic terms was limited and mostly late, and restricted to specific circumstances. Kings did not customarily use as formal titulature the names we know well, nor, when they did so, did they draw on any coherent western or barbarian rhetoric of ethnicity. Their titles tell us something about contemporary images of authority, but not that ethnicity was the determiner of power.

The theory of ethnogenesis associated with Reinhard Wenskus, Herwig Wolfram, and Walter Pohl begins with the prehistoric background of early medieval history. Using linguistic, archaeological, and mythic evidence, it seeks to reconstruct the political dynamics of barbarian societies before their settlement within Roman imperial territories.¹ Nevertheless, the aim of this construct is not palaeontological but teleological: its purpose is to explain the creation of those ethnic groups with which the first medieval

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¹ The main works discussed here are Wolfram, *Intitulatio*; idem, *History of the Goths*; Pohl, 'Conceptions of Ethnicity'; idem, 'Introduction: The Empire and the Integration of Barbarians', in *Kingdoms of the Empire*, pp. 1–11; idem, 'Introduction: Strategies of Distinction'; idem, 'Control of Discourse'; idem, 'Gentilismus', in *RGA* XI (1998), pp. 91–101.

kingdoms are identified, and the rise, according to this view, of ethnicity as the central political force in post-imperial Europe. Ethnic communities, it is said, offered 'new forms of integration' to denizens of the post-Roman West; this may sound like a social phenomenon, but in fact the historical significance of ethnicity in this view is firmly political. The study of ethnic groups is really the study of the 'topography of power' of the early medieval West.² Ethnicity is elevated from a circumstantial particular to a shaping ideology: 'ethnic discourse became the key to political power', a discourse on par with the 'discourse systems' of Roman imperial and Christian ideologies.³

Intrinsic to these views is the belief that ideological constructs of ethnicity had vigorous circulation throughout the early medieval West, promulgated and sustained by those kings whose power this discourse served to legitimize.⁴ The ethnic identities and differences of barbarian groups, it is said, were not self-evident or static, but needed to be constantly sustained: barbarian leaders 'kept asserting their difference, not only from the Romans, but from other barbarian *gentes*'.⁵ These postulated assertions of ethnic identity are seen as the basis for claims to political power, made through both public and elite media: '[the new claim for power] explains some of the strong ethnic statements in royal titles, law-codes, or histories'; 'names, narratives, and laws affirmed the separate existence of an ethnic group with an exclusive claim to power over certain parts of the ancient *res publica*.'⁶

² Pohl, 'Introduction: Strategies of Distinction', pp. 1–7, quotation at p. 2; idem, 'Empire and Integration of Barbarians', p. 5; J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall of the Roman City* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 354–68.

³ Pohl, 'Introduction: Strategies of Distinction', p. 2; idem 'Control of Discourse', p. 139. In an older academic idiom: Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, p. 2: 'Der "Gentilismus" der landnehmenden Stämme was als Denkform politisch stärker als das römische Reichsbewusstsein der Provinzialen.'

⁴ Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, pp. 9–10; Pohl, 'Control of Discourse', p. 140. Similarly, Peter Heather, 'The Creation of the Visigoths', in *The Visigoths from the Migration Period to the Seventh Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. by Peter Heather, *StHistArch*, 4 (Woodbridge, 1999), pp. 41–92 (pp. 58–59, 74–75, 86), though preferring a small oligarchy of noble families rather than a single royal dynasty as *Traditionsträger*.

⁵ Pohl, 'Introduction: Strategies of Distinction', pp. 2 (quotation), 7; idem, 'Telling the Difference', pp. 21–22.

⁶ Pohl, 'Introduction: Strategies of Distinction', p. 2; idem, 'Control of Discourse', p. 139 (citing Wolfram, *Intitulatio*, and framed with reference to Averil Cameron's exploration of Christian discourse within the later Roman empire, outlined in her preceding paper in the same volume: 'Social Language and Its Private Deployment', in *East and West: Modes of Communication*, ed. by Evangelos Chrysos and Ian Wood, *TRW*, 5 (Leiden, 1999), pp. 111–25; and eadem, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley, 1991)); Pohl, 'Gentilismus', p. 100: 'Der "G[entilismus]" wurde so zum Gegenstand der Herrschaftslegitimation und Propaganda röm[isch]-germ[anischer] K[önige], die sich schon im Herrschertile darauf beriefen (*rex Francorum, rex gentis Langobardorum* unv.).'

Isolated and rhetorical statements of ethnic consciousness, pride, or simple identification appear in a variety of texts. It is a big step from them to a 'discourse of power' permeating and determining political structures throughout the West. This concept lifts ethnicity to a central place in our understanding of the public ideologies and political changes of Late Antiquity. Is this elevation justified? The after-life of imperial political discourse and the gathering impetus of Christian ideologies on all levels of social structure are readily discernible in the early medieval West; it is also clear that ethnic identities played a role in post-imperial developments, if only because of the ethnic labels given to the various western kingdoms. That ethnicity actually constituted a coherent, articulated, and purposeful ideology akin to imperial and Christian discourses, however, is far less self-evident. If ethnicity is to be accepted as a politically constructed and manipulated 'discourse', the currency of this postulated flow of ideology needs to be demonstrated.⁷ A check of these claims against what can be known of political discourses in the early medieval West is called for.

⁷ Pohl, 'Memory, Identity, and Power', asserts that Lombard laws and the *Origo gentis Langobardorum* formed a 'complex' which was 'clearly intended to help give coherence and identity to a political and ethnic community' (p. 16). This claim rests on the collocation of the laws and the *Origo* in some manuscripts, since at least the time of Paul the Deacon, and their association with royal courts (unprovable in the case of the *Origo*); codicology conventionally requires a higher standard of proof of the aims of manuscript collections than simple juxtaposition.

For a more specific ethnic ideology assumed to have currency throughout the West: Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, p. 30, who sees the 'indigenous tribal tradition' behind 'Cassiodorus's *Origo Gothica*' (*recte* Jordanes's *Getica*) as so successfully monopolized by Theoderic of Italy in order to reinforce the pre-eminence of his own dynasty, that even the better part of a century later, Isidore of Seville and King Sisenand in Spain were precluded from exploiting Gothic traditions to support the Visigothic monarchy. There is no evidence to sustain this argument *e silentio*. Isidore's dependency on literary sources for his *History of the Goths, Vandals, and Alans* is well established (MGH AA XI, 244, 268–303 with Mommsen's marginal notes; Roger Collins, 'Isidore, Maximus, and the *Historia Gothorum*', in *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. by Anton Scharer and Georg Scheibelreiter (Vienna, 1994), pp. 345–58; cf. Rolf Hachmann, *Die Goten und Skandinavien* (Berlin, 1970), p. 18). There is no hint of an oral background for his composition. The postulated international grip of ethnic and dynastic propaganda, manipulating indigenous oral traditions, is insupportable.

For the supposed oral elements of Jordanes, *Getica* ('the migration story, the heroic epic, and above all the Amal genealogy', Wolfram, *History of the Goths*): Andrew Gillett, 'Jordanes and Ablabius', in *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History X*, ed. by Carl Deroux, Collection Latomus, 254 (Brussels, 2000), pp. 479–500 (pp. 484–85 n. 12 with references (Cassiodorus and Jordanes eschew oral sources in favour of written texts); 494 n. 42 (migration as classical historiographic topos); 493 n. 39 (epic account of Catalaunian plains likely a Cassiodoran composition; cf. the death of Ermanaric, likely derived from Amm. Marc. XXXI 3.1–2)); Cass., *Var.*, IX 25.4 (genealogy).

The postulated discourse of ethnicity belongs to the historical times of the western kingdoms, not only to the so-called 'migration period'.⁸ It ought therefore to be amenable to testing from those sources which register public discourses of power. Well-known literary texts — certain letters in Cassiodorus's *Variae*, the prologues to *Lex Salica* and Rothari's *Edict*, the *Origo gentis Langobardorum*, above all Jordanes's *Getica* — make bold statements, asserting the superiority of one barbarian people over others, or construing the history of a people largely as that of its kings. If these texts are presumed to be fragments of a single conceptual membrane enveloping the late antique West, ideologies can be constructed from them, but at best tentatively. The function of each text and its relationship to its historical context is often unclear — witness the lengthy debate about the purposes of Jordanes's *Getica* and its relationship to earlier works⁹ — and the meaning of some texts, in particular the *Origo gentis Langobardorum*, is highly obscure. There are some resonances between these texts, possibly the result of direct literary influence.¹⁰ Nevertheless, they remain sequestered oddities, not representatives of widespread genres supporting programmatic policies, or necessarily belonging to the same discourses.¹¹ Moreover, literary texts with undefined and probably limited audiences are not the surest records of political realities.

⁸ Pohl, 'Introduction: Strategies of Distinction', pp. 2–6; idem, 'Control of Discourse', p. 140; cf. Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, pp. 8, 14.

⁹ Goffart, *Narrators of Barbarian History*, pp. 20–111; Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pp. 34–67; Pohl, 'Tradition, Ethnogenese, und literarische Gestaltung'; Hans Hubert Anton, 'Origo gentis — Volksgeschichte: Zur Auseinandersetzung mit Walter Goffarts Werk *The Narrators of Barbarian History*', and Johann Weissensteiner, 'Cassiodorus/Jordanes als Geschichtsschreiber', both in *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, pp. 262–307, 308–25; Gillett, 'Jordanes and Ablabius'.

¹⁰ Resonances: e.g. both Athalaric and Rothari claim to be the seventeenth king of their people (though Athalaric claims to be the seventeenth king in his dynasty (Cass., *Var.*, IX 25.4), while Rothari emphasizes the dynastic changes of his ancestors (*Edictum Rothari* in *Leges Lang.*)); on which: Goffart, 'Germanic Antiquity Today', pp. 25–26 n. 64, and above, at p. 35 n. 59. The likelihood that such motifs (including origins in *Scandza/Scandanan*, early battle with the Lombards, and subsequent travels) are literary borrowings is high. Despite common references in modern literature to the barbarian *carmina* thought to lie behind the *Ur*-source of Jordanes's *Getica* (Gillett, 'Jordanes and Ablabius', p. 484 nn. 9 and 12), there is no parallel in that text to the folkloristic introduction of the *Origo gentis Lang.*, 1. (It is noteworthy that divine intrusion into the Lombards' early history in the *Origo gentis Lang.* affects the people as a whole, not a noble dynasty; František Graus, Review of Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung, Historica*, 7 (1963), 185–91 (p. 187); the reply of Herwig Wolfram, 'Methodische Fragen zur Kritik am "sakralen" Königtum germanischer Stämme', in *Festschrift für Otto Höfler*, ed. by H. Birkhan and O. Geschwantler (Vienna, 1968), II, 480–81 and n. 49 is tendentious.)

¹¹ Cf. Goffart, 'Germanic Antiquity Today', pp. 22–24 on the illusory genre of *origines gentium*.

Firmer guides to the articulation of power are those sources which represent the regular presentation of royal authority to the constituents of kingdoms and to neighbouring powers. Under the Roman empire, a variety of media, from ceremonial marking the itineraries of rulers to images on coins, regularly confronted subjects and outsiders with political messages, a ubiquitous 'background noise' of imperial ideology, emphasizing attributes of victoriousness, stability, consensus, and munificence. In the western kingdoms, these media often continued to broadcast the same ideological attributes, with accompanying Christian sentiments. This low-level, pervasive representation of authority represents the vernacular of discourses of power in late-antique polities.¹²

In order to sample the political images projected throughout the western kingdoms, this article examines one of the loci of ethnic identity cited in a quotation above: royal titles — the formulae by which monarchs styled themselves and therefore chose to represent their power.¹³ Titles in the form *rex Gothorum* are commonly considered official, natural, and normative, without implying anything further about their holders' attitudes to ethnicity.¹⁴ These formulae — which for convenience will be referred to here as 'ethnic titles' — are met with regularly in our habitual narrative sources: *historiae*, chronicles, poetry, literary epistles, and hagiographies. If, however, we exclude specifically literary sources, which often use these formulations as convenient shorthand to identify protagonists and are no evidence of official usages, and concentrate only on sources which can reasonably be claimed either as 'official' or as reflecting the contemporary usage of royal chancelleries, there is a surprising want of titles which state the ethnic affiliation of a king. In such official titulature, imperial and Christian forms are evident. But strong evidence of the postulated ethnic discourse of power, of identification of kings with their peoples, is far less apparent. Just as the tribal names *Ostrogothi* and *Visigothi*, made familiar by Jordanes's usage, are anachronisms which do not reflect official or common usage within the Gothic kingdoms, so too familiar titles such as *rex Gothorum* are more literary than official terms.¹⁵ Titles in this form did occur, but they

¹² Sabine G. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1981), pp. 222–66; Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 260–387; Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley, 2000), pp. 206–73.

¹³ Cf. Wolfram, *Intitulatio*, p. 9.

¹⁴ E.g. Edward James, 'The Origins of Barbarian Kingdoms: The Continental Evidence', in *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, ed. by Steven Bassett (London/New York, 1989), pp. 40–52 (pp. 45, 47); Evangelos Chrysos, 'The Title βασιλεύς in Early Byzantine International Relations', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 38 (1978), 29–75 (pp. 36–37).

¹⁵ Names *Ostrogothi* and *Visigothi*: Walter Goffart, 'The Supposedly "Frankish" Table of Nations', in his *Rome's Fall and After* (London, 1989), p. 161; Gillett, 'Jordanes and Ablabius', pp. 495–500; for a different interpretation: Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, pp. 25–26.

were not universal, exclusive, or standard. The normative titulature of western rulers, *rex* or *dominus*, emphasizes their office, not their ethnic following, in terms familiar from late imperial usage.

Evidence for Royal Titulature

The following pages tabulate evidence which can be construed as official or as reasonably likely to reflect official titulature promulgated by royal chancelleries. Though the prerequisites for inclusion are intentionally generous, no claim is made for the table to be exhaustive. Material here is divided into 'chancellery' (i.e. material produced by the court concerned: letters, legal material, and inscriptions; or closely supervised by the court: e.g. coin legends) and 'non-chancellery' (documents produced outside the royal court concerned, which can reasonably be assumed to display informed knowledge of official titulature: letters to rulers from eastern emperors, other kings, senior officials, and bishops; dating formulae and other references in inscriptions and legal documents; references by court servants).

One category of material obviously to be excluded is works with modern titles featuring ethnic names or names of rulers, coined for convenience by editors and sometimes mistaken for original titles. This includes *Lex Romana Visigothorum* (and *Breviarium Alarici*), *Lex Visigothorum*, *Lex Romana Burgundionum*, *Leges Burgundionum*, and *Laterculus regum Vandalorum et Alanorum* and *Laterculus regum Visigothorum*. Some of these works are, in the forms we have them, acephalous; others bear prosaic titles.¹⁶

The kingdoms are arranged roughly in chronological order of their establishment; for convenience, the Visigothic kingdom appears twice, once for the realm centred on Toulouse and once for that of Toledo. Comments on genres, individual sources, and chronological developments follow the tables. For each kingdom, only categories for which evidence exists are listed.¹⁷ A full list of categories of evidence is as follows:

¹⁶ Acephalous: '*Laterculus regum Vandalorum et Alanorum*' and '*Laterculus regum Visigothorum*', ed. by T. Mommsen (MGH AA XIII); so too '*Brev. Alarici*' (Mommsen suggested the original title was *Leges atque species iuris de Theodosio vel de diversis libris electae*; CTh, I, xxxi, xxxvi). Prosaic: '*Lex Vis.*' = *Liber iudiciorum*; '*Leges Burg.*' = *Liber constitutionum sive Lex Gundobada* and *Lex Romana sive forma et exposito legum Romanorum*.

¹⁷ There is no evidence of official titulature for, e.g., the Alan kingdom established in northern Gaul by Aetius; *Chronica Gallica a. 452*, ed. by T. Mommsen (MGH AA IX), p. 124; the Breton kingdom of Armorica; or the Gallic jurisdictions of Aegidius, Syagrius, and Paulus. The Anglo-Saxon kingdoms are not considered here; see Pohl below, p. 232 and nn. 42–43.

CHANCELLERY SOURCES:

- Letters from rulers: super- and subscriptions; other references
- Legal documents: treaties; individual enactments (*constitutiones*, *edicta*, *decreta*, *placita*); codes (title, authentication); charters (superscription, references to earlier or current rulers, scribal formula, signature, other references)
- Coinage
- Inscriptions (monumental, funerary)
- Weights
- Engraved decorative works (jewellery, plateware)
- Seals
- Other

NON-CHANCELLERY SOURCES

- Letters to rulers: superscriptions; other references within letters to rulers; references in other letters
- Inscriptions: dating formulae; other references
- Legal documents: *constitutiones*; charters; decisions
- Formulae
- Church councils: acclamations; dating formulae
- Other dating formulae

Where more than one example of a formula exists for a category, the names of the rulers and minor variations are listed in the second column, and the number of examples appears before the sources in the third column. Where necessary, forms of names and titles are standardized to the genitive or dative; abbreviations for *dominus noster*, *Flavius*, and a small number of other titles have been expanded; *domnus* has been standardized to *dominus*; variant spellings of kings' names have also been standardized. For brevity, Christian elements and common forms of addresses such as the nearly ubiquitous epithet *gloriosissimus*, a title drawn from the senatorial order of rank and imperial usage, are excluded. Short titles of sources appear in the Abbreviations list. Signs and abbreviations: [] indicates variations within formulae; () indicates kings and queens for whom a formula is attested; { } indicates copies of charters and cartularies (as opposed to originals). Titles with ethnic formula are underlined.

SUEVIC GALLAECIA, 411–585

Chancery sources

Coinage	• <i>Richiari reges</i>	<i>RIC</i> x 465
Inscriptions	• <i>Veremundu rege</i>	<i>AE</i> 1997 853

Non-chancery sources

Church Councils:	dating formulae	• <i>regis (Ariamiri, Mironis)</i>	(2 EXAMPLES): <i>Conc. Brac. I and II</i> (PL 84.561, 569)
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VISIGOTHIC GAUL, 418–507
Chancellery sources

Legal documents:	codes: authentication	• <i>Alarici regis</i>	(4 EXAMPLES): <i>Brev. Alarici: praesc., auct., subsc.</i>
Coinage		(all coinage in names of emperors)	
Engraved decorative works		• <i>Alaricus rex Gothorum</i>	(gem): Schramm 217–19, fig. 17

Non-chancellery sources

Letters to rulers:	superscription	• <i>Alarico regi VVisigotharum</i>	Cass. <i>Var.</i> III 1
Inscriptions:	dating formulae	• <i>domini [nostri] (Alarici)</i>	(3 EXAMPLES): <i>CIL</i> XII 2700; XIII 1509, 1529
Legal documents	<i>constitutio</i>	• <i>Alarici regis</i>	<i>Constit. extrav.</i> XXI 7
Church councils:	acclamations	• <i>domino nostro regi [Alarico]</i>	(2 EXAMPLES): <i>Conc. Gall.</i> a.314–506, 192, 212
	dating formulae	• <i>domino nostro regi Alarico</i>	<i>Conc. Gall.</i> a.314–506, 213

VANDAL NORTH AFRICA, 430–534**Chancellery sources**

Legal documents:	<i>constitutiones</i>	• <i>Rex Hunirix Wandalarum et Alanorum</i>	(2 EXAMPLES): <i>Vict. Vit.</i> II 13; III 2
Coinage		• <i>dominus noster rex (Gunthamundus, Thrasamund, Hilderix, Geilamir)</i>	(24 EXAMPLES): Wroth 8–15; Grierson 6–30
		• monogram (of GELIMER)	Wroth 16
Inscriptions		• <i>dominus Geilimer</i>	<i>CIL</i> VIII 10862

Engraved decorative works		• <i>Geilamir rex <u>Vandalorum et Alanorum</u></i>	(basin): <i>CIL</i> VIII 17412
Seals		• <i>Trasemund</i>	Fiebiger I, no. 44
Non-chancellery sources			
Letters to rulers:	superscription	• (<i>Transimundo, Hilderico</i>) <i>regi <u>VVandalorum</u></i>	(3 EXAMPLES): <i>Cass. Var.</i> V 43, 44, IX 1
	references in other letters	• <i>regem Transamundum</i>	<i>Coll. Avell.</i> 212
Inscriptions:	dating formulae	• [<i>nostri</i>] <i>regis (Gesiric, Gunthamundi, Trasamundi, Ilderix, Gelimiri)</i>	(17 EXAMPLES): <i>CIL</i> VIII 2013, 10516, 10706, 11649, 16516, 19210, 25357; Diehl, <i>ILCV</i> 3477; <i>AE</i> 1922 15; 1930 88; 1967 588–92; 1991 1630, 1634
	other references	• <i>regis Trasamundi</i>	<i>CIL</i> VIII 22646, 20
Legal documents:	acts of sale etc.: dating formulae	• <i>domini nostri regis Guntamundi</i>	(24 EXAMPLES): <i>Tabl. Albert.</i> 1–24
Church councils:	dating formulae	• <i>regis Hilderici</i>	<i>Conc. Carthag. a.525</i> 255, 273 (<i>bis</i>)

BURGUNDIAN GAUL, 443–532

Chancellery sources

Letters from rulers:	superscription	• [<i>dominus</i>] (<i>Gundobadus, Sigismundus</i>) <i>rex</i>	(5 EXAMPLES): <i>Avitus, Epp.</i> 21, 29, 47, 78, 93
Legal documents:	codes: authentication	• <i>domini nostri (Gundobadi, Sigismundi) regis</i> • (<i>Gundobadus, Sigismundus</i>) <i>rex <u>Burgundionum</u></i>	(2 EXAMPLES): <i>Liber const.: Praef.</i> I A and B, p. 30 (3 EXAMPLES): <i>Liber const.: Praef. restituta</i> , p. 29; <i>Constit. extrav.</i> XIX 1; XX
Coinage		• monogram of ?GUNDOBAD	<i>RIC</i> x 3785

Inscriptions		• [Gund]obadus rex	CIL XII 2643
		• rex [unnamed]	CIL XIII 2372; <i>PLRE</i> II, 260–61; cf. Wood, 'Burgundians', p. 60 n. 74
Non-chancellery sources			
Letters to rulers:	superscription	• <i>Gundibado regi Burgundionum</i>	(2 EXAMPLES): Cass. <i>Var.</i> I 46, III 2
		• [domino] (<i>Gundobado, Sigismundo</i>) regi	(8 EXAMPLES): Avitus, <i>Epp.</i> 2, 4, 5, 6, 22, 30, 44, 45 (cf. 23, 31, 32, 49, 76, 77, 79, 91, 92: <i>domno Sigismundo</i>)
	other references within letters to rulers	• <i>viri inlustris magistri militum Gunduici</i>	<i>Ep. Arel.</i> 19
Inscriptions:	other references	• <i>domino Gudomaro rege</i>	CIL XII 2584

FRANKISH GAUL, LATE FIFTH CENTURY TO 751

Chancellery sources

Letters from rulers:	superscription	• [dominus] [<i>princeps</i>] (<i>Chlothovechus, Theodebertus, Theodobaldus, Childebertus, Gunthramnus, Chlothacharius, Dagobertus, Sigebertus</i>) rex	(14 EXAMPLES): <i>Capit.</i> 1; <i>Ep. Austr.</i> 18–20, 25, 28, 31, 33; <i>Guntchramni edictum</i> in <i>Capit.</i> 1; <i>Conc. Gall. a.511–695</i> 283, 285; <i>Vita Desiderii Cardurcae</i> , ed. by B. Krusch (MGH Ss rer Merov IV) 13; Desiderius, <i>Ep.</i> II 9, 17
		• <i>Brunichildis regina</i>	(3 EXAMPLES): <i>Ep. Austr.</i> 26, 27, 29
		• (<i>Childebertus, Gunthramnus</i>) rex <i>Francorum</i>	(6 EXAMPLES): <i>Ep. Austr.</i> 32, 34, 37, 38, 39; <i>Guntchramni edictum</i> in <i>Capit.</i> 11
	other references	• <i>Hildebertum regem</i>	(2 EXAMPLES): <i>Ep. Austr.</i> 26, 29

Legal documents:	treaty	• <i>domini Gunthchramnus et Childebertus reges;</i>	(33 EXAMPLES): Treaty of Andelot in Gregory of Tours, <i>Hist.</i> IX 20
		• <i>domina Brunechildis regina</i>	(7 EXAMPLES): Gregory of Tours, <i>Hist.</i> IX 20
	<i>constitutiones, edicta, decreta</i>	• [<i>domini</i>] (<i>Childeberti, Chlotharii, Chilperici</i>) <i>regis</i>	(3 EXAMPLES): <i>Pactus Childeberti I et Chlotharii</i> in <i>Capit.</i> 4, 5; <i>Chilperici Edictum</i> in <i>Capit.</i> 8
		• (<i>Childebertus, Clodacharius</i>) <i>rex Francorum</i>	(2 EXAMPLES): <i>Childeberti decretio</i> in <i>Capit.</i> 15; <i>Chlotharii praeceptio</i> in <i>Capit.</i> 18
charters: superscription		• (<i>Chlodoveus, Childebertus, Chlothacharius, Chilpericus, Dagobertus, Sigibert, Chloduius, Childericus, Theudericus</i>) <i>rex Francorum</i>	(30 EXAMPLES): {MGH Dipl 1–6, 8–9}; <i>ChLA</i> XIII 550, 551, 553, 558, 561–62, 565–68; XIV 572–79, 581, 584–91, 593; XVII 654; XIX 674; Coen, 'Deux actes', 373, 378
charters: signatures		• (<i>Childebertus, Chilperic, Chlothacharius, Dagobertus, Chlodovius, Childericus, Theudericus, Childerthus</i>) <i>rex</i>	(24 EXAMPLES): {MGH Dipl 5, 8}; <i>ChLA</i> XIII 552, 554, 559, 565, 566–68; XIV 577–79, 581, 584–91, 593; XVII 654
		• { <i>Childebertus, Chilpericus rex Francorum</i> }	(2 EXAMPLES): {MGH Dipl 3, 9}
Coinage		• <i>Teudor</i> [and monogram, possibly for TEUDERICUS REX]	Grierson 388
		• <i>dominus noster Theodbertus</i>	Grierson 389
		• (<i>Sigibert, Childericus, Dagobertus, Aribertus</i>) <i>rex</i>	(6 EXAMPLES): Grierson 406–09, 414, 424
Seals		• <i>Childerici regis</i>	Schramm 213–17 (also e.g. Wallace-Hadrill, <i>Long-Haired Kings</i> , frontispiece)

• (*Dagobertus, Theudericus, Clovis, Childebert, Chilperic*)
rex Francorum

(8 EXAMPLES): Lauer and Samaran 28–29

Non-chancellery sources

Letters to rulers:	superscription	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [<i>domino</i>] (<i>Chlodoveo, Childeberctho, Theodoberto, Sigisberto</i>) <i>regi</i> 	(16 EXAMPLES): Avitus, <i>Ep.</i> 46; <i>Ep. Arel.</i> 48, 51–52, 54; <i>Ep. Austr.</i> 1–2, 10, 40; Desiderius, <i>Ep.</i> I 3–5; <i>Ep. aevi Merow.</i> 3; <i>Conc. Gall. a.511–695</i> 4, 111, 215
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>dominae Brunehildae regine</i> 	<i>Ep. Austr.</i> 9
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [<i>domino</i>] (<i>Luduin, Childeberto, Clothario, Theoderico et Theodeberto</i>) <i>regi Francorum</i> 	(14 EXAMPLES): Cass. <i>Var.</i> II 41, III 4; Greg. <i>Reg.</i> V 60, VI 6, 49, IX 215, 226, XI 47, 50–51, XIII 9; <i>Ep. Austr.</i> 41–42; <i>Ep. aevi Merow.</i> 13
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Brunigildae reginae Francorum</i> 	(10 EXAMPLES): Greg. <i>Reg.</i> VI 5, 55, 57; VIII 4; IX 212, 213; XI 46, 48, 49; XIII 7
other references within letters to rulers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>nobilissime rex; rex Francorum illuster</i> 	<i>Ep. aevi Merow.</i> 15
references in other letters		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>regi (Theodebaldo, Theodeberto, Childeberto, Dacoberto, Sigiberto)</i> 	(20 EXAMPLES): <i>Ep. Austr.</i> 3, 6, 9, 11; <i>Ep. Arel.</i> 38, 41, 43 <i>tit.</i> , 44, 45, 47, 49, 53; <i>Ep. aevi Merow.</i> 3, 5, 9, 12; Desiderius, <i>Epp.</i> I 2, II 13; <i>Ep. Wis.</i> 11, 12
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Brunigildem reginam et Theidericum regem</i> 	(3 EXAMPLES): <i>Ep. Wis.</i> 1, 11, 12
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>domina Brunigildes</i> 	<i>Ep. Wis.</i> 1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Childeberti regis Francorum</i> 	(3 EXAMPLES): <i>Ep. Arel.</i> 40 <i>tit.</i> , 44; Greg. <i>Reg.</i> IX 216

Inscriptions:	dating formulae	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>domini [nostri]</i> (22 EXAMPLES): <i>CIL</i> XII 1045, 2654; XIII 905, 1481–86, 1503, 1511–13, 1531–34, 11210; <i>Necropole St-Laurent</i> nos 2, 3, 8, 12 (cf. <i>AE</i> 1950 260) • <i>regis</i> (<i>Theudorici</i>, <i>Clotario</i>, <i>Dagoberti</i>) (3 EXAMPLES): <i>CIL</i> XIII 1534, 2476, 2478 • <i>Dag[berti]</i> <i>CIL</i> XII 2097
Legal documents:	charters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>domini nostri</i> (3 EXAMPLES): <i>ChLA</i> XIII 571; XIV 580, 582
Formulae		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>rex</i> (15 EXAMPLES): <i>Marc.</i>, <i>Form.</i> I 2, 5–6, 9 (<i>bis</i>), 10 (<i>bis</i>), 11, 26–30, 35, 40, II 44 • <i>rex Francorum</i> <i>Marc.</i>, <i>Form.</i> I 39
Church councils:	dating formulae	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [<i>domini nostri</i>] (18 EXAMPLES): <i>Conc. Tarrac.</i> (PL 84.309); <i>Conc. Gerund.</i> (PL 84.313); <i>Conc. Gall. a.511–695</i> 102, 128 (<i>bis</i>), 148, 157, 165, 172, 200, 230, 231, 234, 238, 280, 284, 297, 316
	other references	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [<i>domini</i>] [<i>principis</i>] (25 EXAMPLES): <i>Conc. Gall. a.511–695</i> 4, 105, 148, 153, 167, 189, 206, 223, 226, 235, 238, 275, 287, 291, 292 (<i>bis</i>), 303, 305, 310 (<i>ter</i>), 312, 313 (<i>bis</i>), 315

ODOACER, 476–493

Chancellery sources

Legal documents: charters: signature	• <i>Odovacar rex</i>	Tjäder I, Papyrus 10, I 10
Coinage	• <i>Fl Odovac</i> ; monogram (with prominent <i>D N</i>)	(2 EXAMPLES): Wroth 44–45; Grierson 63–64

Non-chancellery sources

Inscriptions:	dating formulae	• <i>domino nostro Zenone et domino Odovacre</i>	Dessau, <i>ILS</i> 8955
		• [v]iri Odoac[ris]	<i>AE</i> 1967 7
Legal documents:	decisions	• <i>rex Odovacar dominus noster</i>	Tjäder I, Papyrus 10, I 1; II 11–12 (<i>bis</i>)
Other dating formulae		• <i>Odoacris regis</i>	(2 EXAMPLES): <i>Liber pont.</i> 50 (<i>bis</i>)

MOORISH NORTH AFRICA, ?476–?516**Non-chancellery sources**

Inscriptions	• <i>regis Masunae gent. Maurorum et Romanorum</i>	<i>CIL</i> VIII 9835
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OSTROGOTHIC ITALY, 489–552**Chancellery sources**

Letters from rulers:	superscription	• ([<i>Flavius</i>] <i>Theodericus, Athalaricus, Theodahadus, Vitigis</i>) <i>rex</i>	(326 EXAMPLES): Cass. <i>Var.</i> I 1–V 44; VIII 1–IX 25; X 2, 4–7, 9, 11–20, 22–23, 25–35; <i>Ep. Theoderici</i> 392; <i>Acta synodi Romae a. 501</i> 419, 420, 424
		• (<i>Amalasuintha, Gudeliva</i>) <i>regina</i>	(6 EXAMPLES): Cass. <i>Var.</i> X 1, 3, 8, 10, 21, 24
Coinage		• monogram (with prominent <i>D N</i>)	(21 EXAMPLES): Wroth 50–51; Grierson 118–20
		• monogram (THEODERIC, ATHALARIC, THEODAHAD, MATASUNTHA, BADUILA)	(34 EXAMPLES): Wroth 55, 63–64, 66–67, 72, 74, 78, 80–81, 87, 89; Grierson 135–37, 163
		• <i>rex Theodericus pius princ[eps]</i>	Wroth 54

		• <i>dominus noster Athalaricus</i>	(12 EXAMPLES): Wroth 63, 69–70
		• <i>dominus noster (Athalaricus, Theodahathus, VVitiges, Badula, Theia) rex</i>	(73 EXAMPLES): Wroth 64, 67–68, 73–79, 86–88, 90–94, 96–97; Grierson 127–34, 139–44, 151–62, 164–65
Inscriptions		• [<i>dominus noster</i>] <i>rex (Theodericus, Theodahadus)</i>	(6 EXAMPLES): <i>CIL</i> III 10188,1; XI 10, 280; <i>AE</i> 1928 121; 1941 94; Agnellus, <i>Liber pont.</i> 86 (cf. 94); cf. <i>AE</i> 1997 154
Weights		• <i>domini nostri Theoderici</i>	(3 EXAMPLES): Dalton, <i>Cat. Early Chr. Ant.</i> 444; Muratori 577 and 581; Daremberg 877
Non-chancellery sources			
Letters to rulers:	superscription	• <i>Theoderico regi</i>	(4 EXAMPLES): <i>Ep. Theoderici</i> 389, 390, 391; <i>Acta synodi Romae a. 501</i> 422
		• <i>Hereleuvae reginae</i>	(2 EXAMPLES):, <i>Ep. Theoderici</i> 390 (<i>bis</i>)
	references in other letters	• <i>rex Theodericus</i>	(5 EXAMPLES): <i>Acta synodi Romae a. 501</i> 429; <i>Coll. Avell.</i> 147, 199, 212; Avitus, <i>Ep.</i> 34
Inscriptions:	dating formulae	• <i>domino nostro (Teuderico, Athalarico) [bono Romae]</i>	(10 EXAMPLES): <i>CIL</i> V 6418; XII 5341; <i>AE</i> 1888 128d, 134; 1893 121; 1894 126; 1928 75; 1938 67; 1961 285; Agnellus, <i>Liber pont.</i> 86
	other references	• <i>rege Theoderico</i>	(4 EXAMPLES): <i>CIL</i> VI 1794 and 31933; XI 268, 310, 317
		• <i>domino nostro (Theoderico, Athalarico)</i>	(4 EXAMPLES): <i>CIL</i> VI 1665; XIII 10030,5; XV 1674, 1675

		• <i>rege domino nostro</i> (<i>Theoderico</i> , <i>Athalarico</i>)	(8 EXAMPLES): <i>CIL</i> VI 1795; XV 1665, 1669, 1668, 1670, 1671, 2143, 2145
		• <i>dominus noster rex</i> <i>Theodericus augustus</i>	<i>CIL</i> X 6850–6852
Legal documents:	<i>constitutiones</i>	• <i>Theodorici regis</i>	<i>Just. Nov. App.</i> VII 8
Church councils:	acclamations	• <i>Theoderico</i>	<i>Acta synodi Romae a. 499</i> , 405
Other dating formulae		• <i>regis</i> (<i>Theoderici</i> , <i>Athalarici</i>)	(9 EXAMPLES): <i>Liber pont.</i> 50–58 (plus 12 references in text)

VISIGOTHIC SPAIN (INCLUDING NARBONNE), FIFTH CENTURY TO 711

Chancellery sources

Letters from rulers:	superscription and subscription	• <i>Sisebutus rex</i> <i>Wisegotorum</i>	<i>Ep. Wis.</i> 9
		• <i>Flavius</i> (<i>Reccesvinthus</i> , <i>Ervigius, Egica</i>) <i>rex</i>	(11 EXAMPLES): <i>Conc. Tolet.</i> VIII, XII, XIII, XV, XVI, XVII in <i>Lex Vis.</i> 472–84
		• <i>Recharedi regis</i> <i>Gothorum</i>	<i>Greg. Reg.</i> IX 227
Legal documents:	<i>constitutiones</i>	• (<i>Theudi, Vambae</i>) <i>regis</i>	(2 EXAMPLES): <i>Lex Theudi</i> in <i>Lex Vis.</i> 467; <i>Lex Vis.</i> VI 5.21
		• <i>Flavius</i> (<i>Reccaredus</i> , <i>Sisebutus</i> , <i>Chindasuindus</i> , <i>Recessuindus, Wamba</i> , <i>Ervigius, Egicus</i>) <i>rex</i>	(244 EXAMPLES): <i>Lex Vis.</i> (for summary: pp. 488–90)
	<i>leges and edicta</i> confirming church councils	• <i>principis nostri</i> (<i>Gun-</i> <i>demari, Egicanis</i>) <i>regis</i>	(2 EXAMPLES): <i>Conc. Tolet.</i> XII, XV (<i>PL</i> 84.482, 524)
		• <i>Flavius</i> (<i>Chintila</i> , <i>Gundemarus</i>) <i>rex</i>	(5 EXAMPLES): <i>Conc. Tolet.</i> V, VIII, XII, XIII, XVI (<i>PL</i> 84.393, 432, 483, 503, 548)

Coinage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>dominus noster</i> (8 EXAMPLES): Grierson (<i>Livvicildus</i>, <i>Livva</i>, <i>VVittericus</i>) <i>rex</i> 209–10, 224–25, 226–29 • (<i>Leovigildus</i>, <i>Reccaredus</i>, <i>Gundemarus</i>, <i>Sisebutus</i>, <i>Svinthila</i>, <i>Sisenandus</i>, <i>Chintila</i>, <i>Tulca</i>, <i>Chinasvinthus</i>, <i>Reccesvinthus</i>, <i>Vvamba</i>, <i>Ervigius</i>, <i>Egica</i>, <i>VVittiza</i>) <i>rex</i> (68 EXAMPLES): Grierson 211–23, 230–84
Other: addresses to church councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ego</i> (<i>Reccaredus</i>, <i>Baddo</i>) <i>rex/regina</i> (2 EXAMPLES): <i>Conc. Tolet.</i> <i>III</i> (<i>bis</i>) (PL 84.345) • [<i>dominus noster</i>] [<i>Flavius</i>] (<i>Reccaredus</i>, <i>Ervigius</i>, <i>Egica</i>) <i>rex</i> (8 EXAMPLES): <i>Edictum</i> <i>regis</i> in <i>Conc. Tolet. III</i>, <i>XII</i>, <i>XIII</i>, <i>XV</i>, <i>XVI</i>, <i>VII</i> (PL 84.356, 358, 468, 470, 487, 511, 527, 551)
signature to church council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Flavius Reccesuinthus</i> <i>rex</i> <i>Conc. Tolet. VIII</i> (PL 84.432)

Non-chancellery sources

Letters to rulers:	<p>superscription</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>domino</i> (<i>Athanagyldo</i>, <i>Sisebuto</i>, <i>Reccaredo</i>) <i>regi</i> (4 EXAMPLES): <i>Ep. Austr.</i> 27, 28; <i>Ep. Wis.</i> 3, <i>Ep. Wis.</i> 10 • <i>Reccaredo regi Vvisi-</i> <i>gothorum/Gothorum</i> Greg. Reg. IX 228 (MGH), 229 (CCSL) • <i>Ervigio regi</i> Leo II, <i>Ep.</i> 7 (PL 96.418, cf. 424)
other references within letters to rulers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reccaredum regem</i> Greg. Reg. I 41 • <i>dominae meae</i> <i>Ep. Wis.</i> 16 <i>Hildoare regine</i>
references in other letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>dominus meus</i> (<i>Reccaredus/Gundemar</i>) <i>rex</i> (6 EXAMPLES): <i>Ep. Wis.</i> 11–13

Inscriptions:	dating formulae	• <i>domini nostri</i> (<i>Thiudis, Livbani, Athanagildi, Leovigildi, Sisenandi</i>) <i>regis</i>	(6 EXAMPLES): <i>CIL</i> XII 4312, 5342–44; <i>AE</i> 1986 430b=1988 825b
	other references	• <i>tempore potentis Getarum Ervigii regis</i>	Diehl, <i>ILCV</i> 777.5
Formulae		• <i>rex</i>	(2 EXAMPLES): <i>Form. Visigoth.</i> 9; 25
Church councils:	acclamations	• [<i>principi nostro</i>] <i>domine</i> (<i>Reccaredo, Chintilano, Chindasuindo, Reccesuintho</i>) <i>regi</i>	(5 EXAMPLES): <i>Conc. Tolet. III, V, VI, VII, X</i> (<i>PL</i> 84.345, 392, 402, 409, 439)
	dating formulae	• [<i>domini nostri</i>] (<i>Amalarici, Reccaredi, Sisebuti, Chintilani, Chindasuindo, Recesvinthi, Wambanis, Ervigii, Egica</i>) <i>regis</i>	(18 EXAMPLES): <i>Conc. Tolet. II, III, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, XII, XVII</i> (<i>PL</i> 84.335, 341, 347, 389, 393, 403, 411, 433, 467, 551); <i>Conc. Gall. a. 511–695</i> 254; <i>Conc. Caes. II</i> (<i>PL</i> 84.317); <i>Conc. Brac. III</i> (<i>PL</i> 84.585); <i>Conc. Barc. II</i> (<i>PL</i> 84.609); <i>Conc. Narb.</i> (<i>PL</i> 84.609); <i>Conc. Oscense</i> (<i>PL</i> 84.613); <i>Conc. Egarense</i> (<i>PL</i> 84.613); <i>Conc. Emerit.</i> (<i>PL</i> 84. 615)
		• [<i>domino nostro</i>] <i>principis</i> (<i>Sisebuti, Sisenandi, Reccesuinthi, Wamba, Ervigii</i>)	(7 EXAMPLES): <i>Conc. Tolet. IV, X, XI, XIII, XIV, XV</i> (<i>PL</i> 84.363, 439, 451, 487, 505, 509); <i>Conc. Hispanel. II</i> (<i>PL</i> 84.593)
	other references	• [<i>Flavius</i>] <i>domini nostri</i> [<i>principis</i>] (<i>Reccaredi, Sisenandi, Reccesuinthus, Egicani</i>) <i>regis</i>	(15 EXAMPLES): <i>Conc. Gall. a. 511–695</i> 254; <i>Conc. Tolet. III, IV, VIII, IX, X</i> (<i>PL</i> 84.345, 350, 351, 353 (<i>bis</i>), 363, 386, 389, 412, 433, 467, 470); <i>Conc. Caes. II</i> (<i>PL</i> 84.317); <i>Conc. Caes. III</i> (<i>PL</i> 84.317)

LOMBARD ITALY, 568–773

Chancellery sources

Legal documents:	codes:	• (Rothari, Grimuald, Liutprand, Aistulf) rex gentis <u>Langobardorum</u>	(13 EXAMPLES): <i>Leges Lang.: Edictum Rothari</i> (1), <i>Grimualdi leges</i> (1), <i>Liutprandi leges</i> (9), <i>Aistulfi leges</i> (2)
	authentication	• Ratchis princeps	<i>Leges Lang.: Ratchis leges</i>
charters i. regnal:	superscription	• {Flavius (Agilulf; Aduald, Rodoaldus, Perctarit, Cunipert, Aripertus, Liutprandus, Hilprandus, Ratchis, Aistulfus, Desiderius, Adelchis) rex}	(26 EXAMPLES): <i>CDL</i> III 1–3, 5–8, 12–15, 18–19, 22–24, 27–28, 35, 37–40, 42, 43, 44
		• {Flavius Desiderius [atque Adelchis] rex [reges] et Ansa regina}	(4 EXAMPLES): <i>CDL</i> III 31, 33, 36, 41
references to earlier or current rulers		• {in form: dominus/a et genitor/trix noster/tra N. rex/regina}	(15 EXAMPLES): <i>CDL</i> III 2–6, 13, 22, 24, 31, 36–38, 42–44
	scribal formula	• {ex dictu domini regis}	(25 EXAMPLES): <i>CDL</i> III 2, 6–8, 12–15, 18–19, 22–24, 27–28, 33, 35, 37–44
charters ii. ducal:	superscription	• {in form: dominus N dux}	(20 EXAMPLES): <i>CDL</i> IV 1–2, 4–11, 13–15, 17–23
		• {in form: dominus N dux gentis <u>Langobardorum</u> }	(2 EXAMPLES): <i>CDL</i> IV 3, 12
signature		• {in form: dux [gentis] <u>Langobardorum</u> }	<i>CDL</i> IV 14
		• {in form: N dux}	(3 EXAMPLES): <i>CDL</i> IV 28–29, 35
other references		• {Hildeprandus dux}	<i>CDL</i> IV 26

Coinage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monogram (of PERCTARIT REX) • <i>dominus noster</i> (<i>Cunincper[ctus]</i>, <i>Aripe[rtus]</i>, <i>Liutpran[dus]</i>, <i>Ratchis</i>, <i>Aistulf[us]</i>, <i>Desiderius</i>) [<i>rex</i>] 	<p>(7 EXAMPLES): Wroth 136–37</p> <p>(15 EXAMPLES): Wroth 138; Grierson 320; <i>Longobardi</i>, pp. 168–70, nos. IV 21–25, 27 a–b, 30</p>
Inscriptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Agilulf rex totius Ital(iae)</i> • <i>Theodelenda reg[ina]</i> • <i>domini Cunincpert regi</i> 	<p>Bognetti, <i>Eta Longobarda</i>, III, 525</p> <p>Bognetti, <i>Eta Longobarda</i>, III, 524</p> <p><i>AE</i> 1997 515</p>
Engraved decorative works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>domino nostri Agilu[lf] regi</i> • <i>dominus noster Clef</i> • <i>Theodelenda reg[ina]</i> 	<p>(‘Visor’): von Hessen 90–97 (also e.g. McCormick, <i>Eternal Victory</i>, 290)</p> <p>(gold-foil cross): <i>Longobardi</i>, p. 227, no. V 8</p> <p>(gospel cover): <i>Longobardi</i>, pp. 352–54, no. IX 24</p>
Non-chancellery sources		
Letters to rulers:	superscription	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [<i>dominae</i>] (<i>Hlodosuindae</i>, <i>Theodelindae</i>) <i>reginae</i> • (<i>Theodelindae</i>, <i>Aduualualdo</i>) <i>reginae/ regi Langobardorum</i> • <i>dominis Aduualualdo regi gentis Langobardorum et Theodolinde reginae</i>
references in other letters		<p>(2 EXAMPLES): <i>Ep. Austr.</i> 8; <i>Greg. Reg.</i> XIV 12</p> <p>(4 EXAMPLES): <i>Greg. Reg.</i> IV 4, 33; IX 66–67</p> <p><i>Ep. Wis.</i> 9</p> <p>(5 EXAMPLES): <i>Ep. Austr.</i> 8; <i>Columba, Ep.</i> 5; <i>Ep. Lang.</i> 2–3, 8</p> <p><i>Ep. Lang.</i> 17</p>

Inscriptions:	dating formulae	• ?A[n]boino	AE 1992 823
Legal documents:	charters (ducal):	• {domino nostro Desiderio et Adelchis filio eius piissimus regibus}	(7 EXAMPLES): CDL IV 16–22
	dating formulae		

UNCERTAIN ATTRIBUTION

Chancery sources

Legal documents:	codes: title	• <i>Edictum Theodorici regis</i>	FIR II, 684
Seal		• Monogram of ?THEODERICUS or ? TELA	Schramm 219–26; Delbrueck 68–72

Non-chancery sources

Inscriptions:	dating formulae	• ?[G]o[domarus] terrae rex	CIL XII 2660 (Galliae Narbonensis)
		• domini nostri	CIL XII 5345 (Galliae Narbonensis)
		• domini nostri Tu[CIL XIII 904 (Bordeaux)
		• regno [domini nostri] [regi]	(9 EXAMPLES): CIL XIII 418, 497–499, 1108, 1530, 1487, 1488, 1515 (Gaul)
	other references	• regisque domesticus	CIL XIII 2399 (Gaul)
Church councils:	dating formulae	• Theodorici regis	(2 EXAMPLES): Conc. Ilerd. (PL 84.321); Conc. Vallet. (PL 84. 325)

Patterns of Titulature

A survey of this list shows that ethnic titles such as *rex Francorum* are clearly attested in a variety of sources. Clearly also, they are vastly outnumbered by titles without ethnic markers, styling rulers *rex* or *dominus*: of some fifteen hundred examples, only just over one hundred include ethnic markers. It is not self-evident that ethnic titles were the dominant or 'official' form of royal titulature, rather than the better-attested formulae with *dominus noster* or simply *rex*.

Statistics drawn from a range of unevenly preserved sources mean little; it is more significant that, for example, all extant original Merovingian charters, which are preserved from the 620s, are headed *rex Franc(orum)* in display script, indicating the probable style of thousands of lost documents, while none of the copies of the royal Lombard charters style the kings *rex Langobardorum*. The evidence needs to be assessed with attention to the respective types of source.

The number of ethnic titles on the tables above is in fact overstated, since in several manuscript sources the transmitted ethnic title is not part of the original document. This is most obvious for certain epistolary collections. In the cases of the diplomatic letters of Cassiodorus's *Variae* and of the *Registrum* of Pope Gregory I, ethnic titles have been added as a means of distinction by the original editor or later copyists to collections which include correspondence with a plethora of kings from different regions. Some letters of the *Epistolae Austrasicae*, a collection compiled long after the original dispatch of the letters, have had ethnic titles added, inconsistently, for the historical identification of the authors and recipients. The addresses in the rubrics of all these collections do not reflect the actual protocol of the original letters, or the titulature of the recipient courts. The rubrics of both Cassiodorus's *Variae* and the *Epistolae Austrasicae* indicate that ethnic titles in these collections were strictly editorial additions.¹⁸ It remains possible that the lost original addresses did include ethnic titles: two letters of Gregory's *Registrum* preserved separately from the main manuscript collection could be examples of

¹⁸ Cassiodorus: Åke J:son Fridh, *Terminologie et formules dans les Variae de Cassiodore* (Stockholm, 1956), pp. 10–11; Peter Classen, *Kaiserreskript und Königsurkunde: Diplomatische Studien zum Problem der Kontinuität zwischen Altertum und Mittelalter* (1955–56; repr. Thessalonica, 1977), p. 130. Rubrics as editorial additions: the rubric to Cass., *Var.*, III 3 is explicitly editorial; the title *rex VVisigotharum* (Cass., *Var.*, III 1) uses an ethnic name not employed by the Goths of Toulouse (above, n. 15); the title *rex Francorum* (Cass., *Var.*, II 41, III 4) appears in no other letter to or from Clovis; the literary title *rex VVandalorum* does not reflect the apparently official form *rex Vandalorum et Alanorum* (see below).

Ep. Austr.: 18–20, 25–29, 31, 33 (plain *rex* or *regina*); cf. 32, 34, 37–39 (*rex Francorum*). From *Ep. Austr.* 32 onwards, most rubrics are clearly scribal compositions, not original protocol (e.g. *incipit* at 32, 40, 44, 46–48; *simili prologo* at 35–36, 43; note to 41; 45; from 32 onwards, the order of address reverses, placing the sender's name before the recipient's); an exception is 42 (victory titulature of the emperor Maurice). The systematic change from plain *rex* to ethnic titles occurs in the middle of the series of letters concerning Childebert's embassy of 584 to Maurice; it is unlikely that changes in titulature would have been introduced at this point in the original correspondence.

The rubrics of the royal letters in the collection of Avitus of Vienne are similarly not original protocol: Classen, *Kaiserreskript und Königsurkunde*, p. 120. Cf. Wolfram, *Intitulatio*, pp. 81 n. 31, 109, 128 n. 4 (Cass., *Var.*; though cf. 69 n. 76); 128–34, esp. 129 nn. 8–10 (*Ep. Austr.*).

this, though the evidence suggests not.¹⁹ In contrast to these letters addressed to rulers, letters written by monarchs, even where preserved in the same collections, generally style the authors simply *rex* or *regina*. This simple style appears also in royal letters preserved outside epistolary collections, for example in church council *acta*, and is the likely form of the original *intitulatio*.²⁰

The same potential for systematic interference with formulae which is evident in epistolary collections applies also to other manuscript sources, which are potentially tainted by later amendments intended to bring formulae 'up to date', or which have quasi-literary natures rendering suspect the formulae they employ.²¹ Epigraphic,

¹⁹ Gregory, *Registrum*: Dag Norberg, *In registrum Gregorii Magni studia critica* (Upsala, 1939), II, 40–49 (for additions to rubrics: pp. 47–49). Earlier sixth-century papal letters addressed royal correspondents only as *rex*; e.g. Gelasius to Theoderic and Hereleuva (MGH AA XII, 389, 390, 391); Pelagius I to Childebert I (*Ep. Arel.* 48, 51, 52, 54); cf. the later Leo II, *Ep.* 7 (*PL* 96.418). The *Liber diurnus* suggests the existence of a formulaic superscription in papal letters to *reges*, but the relevant details are missing; *Liber diurnus* I 6 (*PL* 105.25).

Letters preserved outside main collection: Greg., *Reg.*, IX 229 in the CCSL edition, ed. Dag Norberg (Turnhout, 1982) (= IX 228 in the MGH edition, which does not include the *inscriptio*) to *Reccaredo regi Gothorum atque Sueuorum*; and XI 37 (CCSL) to *Aedilbercto regi Anglorum* (= Bede, *HE*, I 32). These could preserve the protocol of the original letters. But the formulaic honorifics common to both letters (*gloriosissimo atque praecellentissimo filio*) are traditional papal chancery formulae rather than recipients' self-styling; Norberg, *In registrum Gregorii*, II, 43. The unique form of Reccared's title is suspicious: no other source suggests that the Gothic kings were also called kings of the Sueves after Leuvigild's suppression of the Suevic kingdom in 585 (John of Biclar, *Chronicle* 585.2 (MGH AA XI, 217); cf. Hydatius, *Chron.*, 68 [60] on the Vandal absorption of the Alans; the *infinita multitudo* of Sueves are mentioned, once, in III Toledo (*PL* 84.343), but only clergy and *seniores* of the *Gothica gens* participated in the council). Bede did not have access to original copies of papal correspondence, but used copies made from the papal *scrinium*; Bede, *HE*, *Praef.*; Norberg, *In registrum Gregorii*, II, 42, n. 1. (The tenth-century Old English translation of Bede, *HE*, which omits Gregory's letter to Æthelbert, calls the king only *Æþelberhte cyninge*; *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. by Thomas Muller, EETS (London, 1890; repr. New York, 1978), I 16.)

Within individual letters, Gregory occasionally refers to kings as *Langobardorum rex* (Greg., *Reg.*, IV 2, V 34, VII 23, IX 195, XIV 12); the reversed word order indicates that this is to be understood as a description, not a title.

Cf. Wolfram, *Intitulatio*, pp. 78 (Reccared letter), 128 (Greg., *Reg.*).

²⁰ E.g. Cass., *Var.*, I–V, VIII–X; *Ep. Theoderici* 389–92; *Acta synodi Romae* 501 419, 420, 424; Avitus, *Epp.* 21, 29, 47, 78, 93–94 (Burgundian royal letters); cf. the Frankish and Visigothic royal letters tabulated above.

²¹ One example: Brigitte Pohl-Reisl, 'Legal Practice and Ethnic Identity in Lombard Italy', in *Strategies of Distinction*, pp. 216–17 for Lombard cartularies.

numismatic, and original diplomatic materials have the greatest claim to representing genuine contemporary usage.²²

Monumental inscriptions erected by kings are rare; the few extant employ no ethnic titles. More common are non-royal funerary and other inscriptions, and acts of sale and other deeds preserved on slates, which employ regnal years in their dating formulae. These formulae, together with the legends of coins and of weights, very likely represent titulature in one way or another formally promulgated by courts, or at least not amended by them. Titles in the epigraphic sources are remarkably consistent, most commonly taking the form *dominus noster rex*. The inscriptions are almost wholly devoid of ethnic references.²³ In all kingdoms, most coins were issued in the names of the eastern emperors; even the majority of royal coin legends and monograms appear on the reverse of coins with the *augustus* on the obverse.²⁴ None features ethnic titles.

There are three exceptions to this observation about incised sources.²⁵ Two are engraved decorative works: a sapphire engraved ALARICUS REX GOTHORUM with a stylized portrait, perhaps a seal, like the Merovingian signet rings; and a silver basin engraved on its base † GEILAMIR REX VANDALORUM ET ALANORUM.²⁶ Both are assumed, because of the presence of royal titulature, to have originated from royal treasuries. During the late Roman empire, however, ornamental items decorated with the correct titulature of

²² Epigraphic and numismatic sources are not discussed systematically in Wolfram, *Intitulatio*; for isolated exceptions, i.e. the Moorish royal inscriptions: pp. 38–39, 82–86.

²³ The only two ethnic references on inscriptions are the Masuna inscription, possibly a formal title, discussed below; and the classicising title *Gesarum* [...] *regis* for the Visigothic king Ervig, certainly a poetic, not official, epithet.

For an overview of the formulae used in inscriptions erected by or commemorating western kings: Diehl, *ILCV*, I, 10–14; Dessau, *ILS*, III, Index 4, pp. 318–20. For dating formulae of the western kings: T. Mommsen, 'Das römisch-germanische Herrscherjahr', in his *Gesammelte Schriften*, 6 vols (Berlin, 1905–13; repr. Berlin, 1965), VI, 343–58. An interesting group of inscriptions are those commemorating palatine servants, with references to the kings they served: for Gothic Italy: *CIL* VI 1794 and 31933, 32003; XI 268, 310, 317 (= Fiebiger I, nos 182–84, 187–88); MGH AA XII, 499 s.v. Senarius (= Fiebiger II, no. 8); for Burgundian and Frankish Gaul: *CIL* XII 1499; MGH AA VI.2, 187 (= *PLRE* III, 'Pantagathus 1 and 2,' pp. 963–65). Acts of sale: *Tabl. Albert.* of Vandal Africa; for the Visigothic slates, see Pohl below at n. 42.

²⁴ Wroth, pp. xv–lx; Grierson, pp. 12–13.

²⁵ A ?late-fourth/early-fifth-century Trier funerary inscription styling the father of the deceased as *regalis gentis Burgundionum* (*CIL* XIII, 3683) is not relevant here, as it dates from before the establishment of the Burgundian kingdom in Gaul and refers, presumably, to a tribal leader allied to the Romans; it reflects, however, Roman usage of ethnic titles as terms of convenience.

²⁶ Sapphire: Fiebiger I, no. 250; P. E. Schramm, 'Brustbilder von Königen auf Siegelringen der Völkerwanderungszeit', in his *Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik*, vol. I (Stuttgart, 1954), pp. 217–19 and fig. 17; Wolfram, *Intitulatio*, pp. 77–78. Basin: *CIL* VIII, 17412.

the emperors, accompanied by imperial portraits, could be owned by private citizens of high status; it is possible that this was true also for the western kingdoms.²⁷ The sapphire is usually attributed to Alaric II, because his more famous forebear is not known to have borne the title *rex*, and has been cited as displaying Alaric's true titulature. The formal title of Alaric II is, however, firmly attested as *Alaricus rex* in the authenticating material preceding the abridged version of the *Libri Theodosiani* which he published in 506, in documents issued both by the king himself and by senior palatine servants.²⁸ There is no justification for privileging the uncertain evidence of the engraved gem over that of the official and widely disseminated product of the royal chancellery.²⁹

The Gelimer basin duplicates the title of the only known legal documents of the Vandal kings, two *constitutiones* of the king Huneric preserved in Victor of Vita's *Historia persecutionis*. There are other indications that Geiseric's successors were recognized by contemporaries as kings of both the Vandals and the Alans.³⁰ This dual title is the only firmly attested ethnic royal titulature of any western king before the seventh century. Nevertheless, the only extant inscription apparently erected by a Vandal king describes him as DOMINUS GEILIMER; the sole extant Vandal royal seal is without title; while coinage and dating formulae (in inscriptions and the original acts of sale preserved in the *Tabletti Albertini*) style the kings *dominus noster rex*. No

²⁷ E.g. the 'Constantine bowl', probably from Egypt, with titulature and portraits of Constantine and Fausta (Dalton, *Cat. Early Chr. Ant.*, 916), and the portraits of Constantius II and Gallus in the encyclopaedic codex produced for a Christian aristocrat of Rome (Michele Renee Salzman, *On Roman Time: The Codex-Calendar of 354 and the Rhythms of Urban Life in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1990), pp. 34–35, 199–202 and figs 13–14; for the official context: p. 200). The medalion of Theoderic, like earlier contorniates, may similarly have marked the recipient's high status.

²⁸ *Brev. Alarici: praesc., auct., subsc.*; cf. *Constit. extrav.* XXI 7. Note that the inscription of the signet ring of the Frankish king Childeric, an older contemporary of Alaric II, reads *Childerici regis*, with no ethnic title.

²⁹ Cf. Wolfram, *Intitulatio*, pp. 77–78, and *idem*, *History of the Goths*, p. 206: 'From the period before 507 no official document carrying a royal title has survived; the closest thing is the inscription *Alaricus rex Gothorum* on the Vienes seal ring that probably belonged to Alaric II'; here and elsewhere in the book (including lengthy discussions of the *Breviarium* of Alaric II, published February 506), the title attested in the king's *subscriptio* to his *auctoritas* and the attached authenticating documents of two palatine officials receives no discussion.

³⁰ Vict. Vit. II 13, III 2. Other attestations: *Additamenta Africana a. 446–455 ad Prosperi epitoma chronicon, sub anno 455* (MGH AA IX, 487) (despite Mommsen's title for this fragment, the entry concerned indicates that the continuation was made after the death of Geiseric in January 477, i.e. under Huneric, author of the two *constitutiones* preserved by Victor of Vita); Justinian's victory title *Alanicus Vandalicus Africanus*, cited by T. Mommsen, 'Vandalische Beutestücke in Italien', in his *Gesammelte Schriften*, IV, 565 n. 2; Proc., *Wars*, III 24.3. On the title: Ludwig Schmidt, *Geschichte der Wandalen*, 2nd edn (Munich, 1942), pp. 156–57; Christian Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique* (Paris, 1955), p. 237 and n. 7.

epigraphic source offers the form of title familiar from literary sources, *rex Vandalorum*. The ethnic title of the latter Vandal kings is not exclusive, and what function the dual title *rex vandalarum et alonorum* served is not clear.³¹

The third inscription which records an ethnic title for a western king is a commemorative inscription on a fort built in Mauretania Caesarea in North Africa during the reign of REX MASUNAE GENTIUM (or GENTIS) MAURORUM ET ROMANORUM in 508.³² The Vandal and Moorish titles are the only titulatures asserting a ruler's authority over more than one ethnic group, prior to Charlemagne's arrogation of the Lombard kingship in 773/774. That both come from North Africa is striking, and perhaps reflects the opposition of the Moorish principalities to the Vandal kingdom.³³

No other epigraphic source — commemorative inscription, coin legend, or dating formula — features ethnic titles. It is noteworthy that the best known, much-reproduced images of the early kings on plastic materials — the seal of Childeric, the

³¹ The overthrow of the Alani by the Goths in 418 (Hydatius, *Chron.*, 68 [60]) and their long cohabitation with the Vandals under Geiseric, surely the most successful war-lord of the fifth century, ought to be a prime example of the ethnogenesis model, i.e. *gentes* as war bands gathering up such remnants, who then submerge their ethnic identity under that of vigorous dynastic leaders. But to the contrary, the attestations (all late fifth or sixth century) of the dual royal title of Geiseric's successors suggest some form of sustained separate identity of the Alani — sustained, at least, by royal formulae.

Sid. Ap., *Carmen*, II 364, 379 describes the Alani as allies in war and *consanguinei* of the Vandals. Procopius once uses the formula βαυδίων τε καὶ Ἀλανῶν βασιλέως (protocol of a letter from a Vandal general to Gelimir; *Wars*, III 24.3), but regularly refers to the Vandal rulers only as βαυδίων βασιλέως (e.g. *Wars*, III 9.20). He says that the name 'Vandal' was commonly used for the Alani and other barbarians except the Moors (*Wars*, III 5.21), but does not state that Alani and Vandals were no longer distinguishable. Possidius (*Vita di S. Agostino*, ed. by Michele Pellegrino (Alba, 1955), 28, written 430s) was conscious of Alans and Goths joining in the Vandal occupation of Africa, but Victor of Vita (writing mid-/late 480s) never mentions the Alans in his narrative, despite preserving the two *constitutiones* cited above and frequently referring to the allied Moors. The Alani are not considered by Peter Heather, 'Disappearing and Reappearing Tribes', in *Strategies of Distinction*, pp. 95–111 (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 99–106 and *Proc.*, *Wars*, VII 2.1–2 for the Rugi in Italy, another fragmentary group unaffected by the charisma of a successful leader, Theoderic).

³² *CIL* VIII, 9835; *PLRE* II, 734–35. A claim for an analogous position (claiming the title *imperator*) for one Masties has been strongly disputed: Jérôme Carcopino, 'Un "empereur" maure inconnu d'après une inscription latine récemment découverte dans l'Aurès', *Revue des études anciennes*, 46 (1944), 94–120; *AE* 1945 97; Paul-Albert Février, 'Masuna et Masties', *Antiquités africaines*, 24 (1988), 133–47 (rejection of view of Masties as *imperator*); Pierre Morizot, 'Pour une nouvelle lecture de l'*elogium* de Masties', *Antiquités africaines*, 25 (1989), 263–84. I am grateful to Mark Handley for bibliographic direction.

³³ Wolfram, *Intitulatio*, pp. 82–86.

medallion of Theoderic, the 'visor' of Agilulf — all carry inscriptions styling the kings simply *rex*.³⁴ The evidence of coin and weight legends and of regnal dating formulae is perhaps the best indication available of how royal titles were imprinted on public consciousness throughout at least the fifth and early sixth centuries. The dearth of ethnic epithets is eloquent.

The absence of such titles cannot be explained by conservatism on the part of engravers and die-casters. Although imperial epithets such as *dominus noster* and *gloriosissimus* were maintained as ubiquitous formulae, the title *rex* itself was a conspicuous innovation, potentially easy to expand in order to include distinct abbreviations for ethnic names (as, in the protocol of seventh-century charters, *rex franc* appears as the standard royal title). Both coin legends and imperial titles on inscriptions regularly projected epithets of imperial attributes, in forms abbreviated by convention; inscriptions of the Ostrogothic kings continued imperial usage of certain epithets such as *BONO ROMAE*.³⁵ There is no evident practical reason why ethnic titles could not have supplanted or complemented these epithets if they were a regular part of the way western kings presented themselves to subjects and neighbours. Epigraphic sources, like manuscript documents, were by no means impervious to the intrusion of new formulae and symbols drawn from Christian culture, as a glance through the indices of *CIL* amply demonstrates, but ethnic discourses failed to impress upon these media.

There is a small group of documentary materials, produced by royal chancelleries and preserved on papyri or parchment, which, like epigraphy, is free from suspicion of later interpolation. A single Italian papyrus includes a copy of a gift of land by Odoacer, styling himself *Odoacar rex*, embedded in a record of a legal process which makes three references to him as *dominus noster rex*. Odoacer's lack of ethnic title is well known, as is that of his successor as ruler of Italy, Theoderic.³⁶ What is less widely recognized is that their form of title was typical of both earlier fifth-century kings and later rulers.

The other documentary sources preserved in original form are thirty-six royal Merovingian charters. All are headed with superscriptions in the form *N. rex Franc(orum)* in

³⁴ Delbrueck; Schramm 213–34; Donald Bullough, 'Images regum and their Significance in the Early Medieval West', *Studies in Memory of David Talbot Rice*, ed. by Giles Robertson and George Henderson (Edinburgh, 1975), pp. 223–76 (pp. 228–36).

³⁵ Coin legends: e.g. indices to legends in *RIC* IX, 317; X, 479. *Bono Romae*: *CIL* XV, 1663–1665; *AE* 1928 75; 1938 67; 1961 285.

³⁶ Wilhelm Ensslin, *Theoderich der Grosse* (Munich, 1947; the second edition was not available to me), pp. 83, 159–60; Classen, *Kaiserreskript und Königsurkunde*, p. 126; A. H. M. Jones, 'The Constitutional Position of Odoacer and Theoderic', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 52 (1962), 126–30; idem, *LRE*, I, 247; E. A. Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians: The Decline of the Western Empire* (Madison, WI, 1982), p. 69; Wolfram, *Intitulatio*, p. 77; idem, *History of the Goths*, p. 286; John Moorhead, *Theoderic in Italy* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 39–40; Amory, *People and Identity*, pp. 455–56.

display script. The seals preserved on seven of these charters also give this title.³⁷ Other royal titles within the texts, including signatures, dating formulae, and references to royal predecessors, are simply *N. rex* (often in the formulae *N. in Christi nomine rex* for signatures, *dominus noster gloriosissimus N. rex* for dating formulae). The surviving original charters commence in the 620s, and the seals are dated between 679 and 716. Many cartulary copies of earlier documents follow this style, but it is not at all certain that these formulae were in fact used earlier than the seventh century. Important elements of chancery styles evolved between the fifth and seventh centuries. It is possible that the ethnic title formulae were introduced anachronistically into cartulary copies by monastic copyists in order to reflect contemporary usage; those cartulary documents which give signatures also in the form *rex Francorum* for good measure clearly have been modified.³⁸ The original papyrus and parchment charters, however, stand as representatives of a very large body of lost seventh- and eighth-century documentation, which it is safe to assume used the same ethnic formulae of royal titulature.³⁹

Yet almost no other source originating in the royal chancelleries of the Frankish kingdom features ethnic titles. The exceptions are some of the royal letters in the *Epistolae Austrasicae*, the rubrics of which, as discussed above, are editorial, and several copies of individual *decretiones*, which are offset by others with the titles *dominus rex*. The text of the Treaty of Andelot (581), preserved in the *Historiae* of Gregory of Tours, is particularly striking as a chancery product using only the titles *rex* and *regina*; it is contemporary or slightly earlier than the first texts which style the Frankish kings with ethnic titles. Among sources produced within Gaul but outside the court, the *acta* of the many Gallic church councils never use ethnic titles when acknowledging royal directives to convene synods or in other references. Nor do letters addressed to the Merovingian kings (except those in the collections of Cassiodorus, Gregory I, and some of the *Epistolae Austrasicae*, again discussed above). Though the use of the title *N. rex Francorum* is not exclusive to charters, it is very nearly so.

This pattern is reversed in documents from the Lombard kingdom. The considerable body of royal charters from the Lombard kingdom (all extant only in copies) features no

³⁷ Original charters: *ChLA* XIII 550–54, 558–59, 561–62, 565–68, 571; XIV 572–79, 580–82, 584–91, 593; XVII 654; XIX 674. Seals: Lauer and Samaran, nos 16, 19, 23, 25, 27, 30, 35, pp. 28–29, and plate 43; there is also a single undated seal in a hoard find: *DAGOBERTUS REX FRANCORUM*, p. 28 no. 2.

³⁸ Evolution of format: Classen, *Kaiserreskript und Königsurkunde*, pp. 132–95; David Ganz and Walter Goffart, 'Charters Earlier than 800 from French Collections', *Speculum*, 65 (1990), 906–32 (p. 911). Copies of earlier charters: e.g. MGH Dipl 3, 9. For an overview of work to distinguish between genuine and false copies: Carlrichard Brühl, 'Das merowingische Königtum im Spiegel seiner Urkunden', in *La Neustrie: Les pays au nord de la Loire de 650 à 850*, ed. by Hartmut Atsma, vol. I (Sigmaringen, 1989), pp. 523–33.

³⁹ Ganz and Goffart, 'Charters Earlier than 800', p. 912.

ethnic titles for kings.⁴⁰ Yet the Lombard kings are styled *rex gentis Langobardorum* in the legal collections, a crucial source for the association between ethnic identity and 'barbarian' laws.⁴¹ This is the only extant type of official source which gives an ethnic title for the Lombard kings. The formula, with the consistent use of *gentis*, differs somewhat from the Frankish title. Rothari's prologue to the first known codification of laws in the Lombard kingdom styles him *rex gentis Langobardorum*, uses the Lombard entry into Italy as a temporal reference (as do several other texts), and lists previous kings of the Lombards together with their various dynastic ties. The *Origo gentis Langobardorum*, as Paul the Deacon testifies, was transmitted with copies of Rothari's *Edictum*, though this does not prove any official standing.⁴² Throughout the several legal collections, the kings customarily style themselves in the formula used by Rothari. Yet, just as royal Merovingian ethnic titles are largely restricted to Frankish charters, so the association between codifications of law and ethnic royal titlature applies almost exclusively to Lombard Italy. Lombard royal charters, coinage, and inscriptions do not feature ethnic titlature.

Ethnic royal titlature does not feature prominently in the law codes of other kingdoms. As discussed above, the Visigothic king Alaric II is styled *rex* in the prefatory material of the abridged version of the *Libri Theodosiani* he issued; his successors in Spain are always styled *Flavius rex* in their *constitutiones*; the *Edictum Theodorici regis* is frustratingly uninformative of its author's background (though now generally ascribed to the Ostrogothic Theoderic); individual enactments of Frankish kings vacillate in featuring or omitting ethnic titles, but the problematic texts of the Salic law have been transmitted without explicit attribution to an individual king or ethnic titlature, despite the strong ethnic pride demonstrated in its preface. The Burgundian *Liber constitutionum* is the only other legal code whose issuing kings are styled with ethnic titles. The ethnic titlature attached to the names of Gundobad and Sigismund may be firm for the two supplementary *constitutiones extravagantes* bearing their names, but in the preface to the main code, the manuscript traditions (varying between naming father or son as issuing king) gives their titles as *dominus noster rex*; only editorial reconstruction provides the title *rex Burgundionum*.⁴³ Ethnic distinctions feature in the provisions of several legal texts, and the publication of many law codes is associated

⁴⁰ Anton Chroust, *Untersuchungen über die langobardischen Königs- und Herzogsurkunden* (Graz, 1888), pp. 28–31. Some ducal charters, mostly Beneventan, have superscriptions or signatures in the form [*dominus*] *N. dux* [*gentis*] *Langobardorum*; Chroust, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 109–13, 137–39; *CDL* IV 3, 12, 14. There are no comparable collections of charters extant from the other western kingdoms.

⁴¹ Chroust, *Untersuchungen*, p. 30. Ethnic identity and law: e.g. Patrick Wormald, 'Lex scripta and verbum regis: Legislation and Germanic Kingship, from Euric to Knut', in *Early Medieval Kingship*, ed. by P. H. Sawyer and Ian Wood (Leeds, 1979), p. 107.

⁴² Paul the Deacon, *Hist. Lang.*, I 21.

⁴³ *Liber consti.*, *Constit. extrav.* XIX 1, XX; *Praef.* I A and B; *Praef. restituta*.

with a particular king; but it is only the Lombard codes which consistently style the king with an ethnic title.⁴⁴

Considered diachronically, the best evidence for the adoption of ethnic royal titles, the original Frankish charters and the Lombard law codes, is late; both come from the seventh century.⁴⁵ Of the kingdoms established in the first generations after the collapse of Roman power in the West, only Vandal and Moorish Africa provides more-or-less unambiguous evidence of ethnic titulature, though not as the exclusive or necessarily dominant royal titulature. Ostrogothic Italy is the best attested of the fifth- and sixth-century kingdoms, and the Ostrogoths are the barbarian people with the best claim to having an ethnic ideology, based on some modern interpretations of Jordanes's *Getica*. Cassiodorus's *Variae* exploits classical topoi of barbarians' skills in war to present the Goths as beneficial to their Italian subjects, and Theoderic may even have publically celebrated the *tricennalia* of his accession to Gothic rule.⁴⁶ Yet the Italian Goths exhibit no evidence of ethnic titulature, and their Visigothic cousins fare little better. Assertions of difference via ethnic affiliation are not obvious in the titulature of the early western kings, when, if ever, such competition as part of the establishment of a new discourse of power ought to be evident.

If an 'ethnic discourse of power' operated in the post-imperial West, and royal titulature formed part of this rhetoric, where is such a discourse to be 'located' — in which media or venue? Royal titulature likely to be met by a broad range and large numbers of subjects of the western kingdoms, such as on coins and inscriptions, is devoid of ethnic messages. So too are documents associated with the most powerful figures in early medieval society: the church, senior officials, and other royal or imperial rulers (the absence of ethnic titulature in royal documents preserved in the Visigothic church councils is striking, in view of the close association between the Spanish church and kings, and explicit references to the *Gothica gens* in III Toledo).⁴⁷ The media which

⁴⁴ Ethnic distinctions: Patrick Amory, 'The Meaning and Purpose of Ethnic Terminology in the Burgundian Laws', *Early Medieval Europe*, 2 (1993), 1–28. Association with king: Wormald, '*Lex scripta*', pp. 107–08.

⁴⁵ Cf. the Merovingian seals: the seal ring of Childeric (d. c. 482) reads only *N. regis*; the royal seals attached to the original Merovingian charters (earliest charters c. 620s, earliest seal 679) read *N. rex Francorum*.

⁴⁶ Cass., *Var.*, e.g. IX 14.8, XII 5.4. *Tricennalia*: Anonymus Valesianus, in *Excerpta Valesiana*, ed. by Jacques Moreau and Velizar Velkov (Leipzig, 1968), I 67 with Moorhead, *Theoderic in Italy*, pp. 60–61 and n. 113.

⁴⁷ III Toledo: *PL* 84.343, 345–46, 350; see E. A. Thompson, *The Goths in Spain* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 277–82; Roger Collins, *Early Medieval Spain: Unity in Diversity, 400–1000* (Houndmills, 1983), pp. 116–23, 128; Judith Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (Princeton, 1987), pp. 237–39. Senior members of society: cf. Wolfram, *Intitulatio*, pp. 129–30, arguing that, though ethnic titles were the main titulature of the western kings, chancelleries systematically avoided using these titles in correspondence with emperors, bishops, and *hohe weltliche Grosse*, and did

best attest ethnic titles are royal land transactions and judgements in the Frankish kingdom, and codifications of laws in Lombard Italy. To be sure, these texts concern crucial aspects of the exercise of royal power. But the categories of evidence are not reciprocal between kingdoms; neither charters nor laws can be seen to have functioned as a pervasive medium for political ideologies. The sources do not interact in any way as to suggest participation in a common discourse. Like the Vandal royal title, these texts say something about association between ethnic terms and monarchy in their respective kingdoms, but just what that is needs to be elucidated with particularity to each source type and kingdom. They need not be protrusions of a homogeneous, widespread, but oddly concealed phenomenon of ethnic political rhetoric; if they are, it is hard to see why the patterns of preservation should be so specific and exclusive.

Indeed, what seems to distinguish kingdoms which display official use of ethnic titles from those without is not ethnic ideology but their complex domestic political structures. The Frankish kingdom was constituted from multiple and shifting *Teilreiche* ruled by parallel branches of the Merovingian dynasty; the Lombard state comprised the royal jurisdiction in northern Italy and the largely independent duchies in the south, separated by the thin ribbon of Byzantine control. The use of ethnic titles in select types of documents in Gaul and Lombard Italy may have been reactions to these internal divisions: not assertions of ethnic identity, but statements of political unity within each articulated *regnum* — faint echoes of the practice of fourth- and fifth-century Roman emperors in publishing their *constitutiones* in the joint name of the imperial college.⁴⁸ By contrast, Visigothic Spain, which suffered no such divisions in its political topography, did not employ royal ethnic titlature.

The Title 'rex'

Though ethnic titles are familiar to us from their use in literary sources to identify protagonists, they were not the dominant or normative formulae of the early medieval kings.⁴⁹

not employ them exclusively when addressing other kings. For whom then were their ethnic titles employed? Ethnic titles can hardly have been reserved for an exclusive coterie of *Traditions-träger*, as such titles appear so openly in literary sources.

⁴⁸ Cf. Chroust, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 109–10; Classen, *Kaiserreskript und Königsurkunde*, p. 152.

⁴⁹ Wolfram, *Intitulatio*, presents ethnic titles as the dominant form of titlature by employing unwarranted privileging of select evidence, e.g. pp. 77–79 (Visigothic kings as *reges Gothorum*, citing the gem attributed to Alaric II, the superscription to Cass., *Var.*, III 1, and the letter of Sisenand to Adaloald; but ignoring formulae in Alaric's *Breviarium*, the Visigothic laws, the Visigothic church councils, and the doubtful nature of Cassiodorus's rubric (see above, nn. 18, 28)); 90–99, at 90 (describing *der Kern* of Rothari's title as it appears in his *Edict* — *Ego in Dei nomine Rotari vir excellentissimus et septimo decimum rex gentis Langobardorum* — as *rex gentis Langobardorum*, although only the word *rex* is shared with other Lombard royal titlature).

Austere *rex*, or *dominus noster rex*, is likely to have been how kings, magnates, subjects, and neighbours understood a ruler's title, certainly for the fifth and sixth centuries.

In some studies, royal names and titles have been used as evidence of how rulership was conceived and structured among barbarian groups. The name *Flavius*, attested for Odoacer and the Ostrogothic, Lombard, and Visigothic kings, has been seen as an alternative to ethnic titles; in this view, the quasi-imperial '*praenomen*' signals a hierarchy of kingdoms, placing monarchies bearing *Flavius* over those without, such as the Franks.⁵⁰ But the argument depends upon a false dichotomy between supposedly normative ethnic titles and '*Flavius*-titles'; the many examples of titles with neither qualification must be construed arbitrarily as examples of the '*Flavius*-title'. Moreover, *Flavius*, the most common late Roman '*praenomen*' by a huge degree, did not carry the imperial connotations this argument assumes it to have had, notwithstanding the evident role played by Constantine's dynasty in popularizing it.⁵¹ *Flavius* appears to have served as a name rather than as a title for king, just as it had for other individuals.⁵² The selective usage of the name probably reflects regional differences. The Lombard kings regularly used both *Flavius* (in charters) and ethnic titles (in law codes), as well as *princeps* and *rex* without qualification. Titulature patterns are neither so orderly nor so charged with complex meaning as this theory holds.

Another, related attempt to invest the titles of western kings with a freight of constitutional implications sees the ubiquitous Latin term *rex* as understood, by barbarians and Romans, as an explicitly Gothic word for a leader, *reiks*, 'an expression visible for all the world'.⁵³ The argument rests in part on the topos of the ancient Romans' rejection

⁵⁰ In the fourth to sixth centuries, *Flavius*, though rightly a *nomen*, was used something like a *praenomen*; see references at next note. As quasi-imperial title: Wolfram, *Intitulatio*, pp. 56–76, with summary at 75–76, following Richard Heuberger, 'Vandalische Reichskanzlei und Königsurkunden', *MIÖG* supp. 11 (1929), 76–113 (pp. 96–98). For an earlier interpretation of *Flavius* as a barbarian title: n. 60 below. The *locus classicus* for *Flavius* and barbarian kings is Paul the Deacon, *Hist. Lang.*, III 16.

⁵¹ *Consuls of the Later Roman Empire*, ed. by Roger S. Bagnall and others, Philological Monographs of the American Philological Association, 36 (Atlanta, 1987), pp. 36–40; Benet Salway, 'What's in a Name? A Survey of Roman Onomastic Practice from c. 700 BC to AD 700', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 84 (1994), 124–45 (pp. 137–40).

⁵² E.g. *Flavius* appears in the superscription of two letters of Theoderic of Italy, but not on his inscriptions (MGH AA XII, 420, 424; CIL XI, 10, 280; AE 1928 121, 1941 94); Reccared's edict confirming III Toledo has *dominus noster Reccaredus rex* in the superscription, *Flavius Reccaredus rex* in the signature (PL 84.356–58).

⁵³ Wolfram, *Intitulatio*, pp. 39–43, 53–56, quotation at 55: 'für alle Welt sichtbaren'; also e.g. idem, *History of the Goths*, pp. 94–96, 113, 144–46, 206. The idea was suggested by Felix Dahn, well before modern ethnogenesis theory, with regard to Theoderic of Italy; *Die Könige der Germanen*, vol. II (Munich, 1861), p. 265, cited by Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, p. 581 n. 18. It is rightly dismissed by Marc Reydellet, *La royauté dans la littérature latine de Sidoine Apollinaire à Isidore de Séville* (Rome, 1981), pp. 202–05.

of kingship after Tarquin Superbus, and the assumed abhorrence of Romans thereafter to the term *rex* (though in fact, under the late empire and indeed earlier, *rex* was often used to describe the *augusti*⁵⁴). The main textual support for this argument comes from Procopius's *Wars*: '[Theoderic] was called *rex* to the end of his life, for thus the barbarians are accustomed to call their leaders'; Procopius is taken to say that *rex* is a barbarian term.⁵⁵ The passage in fact implies no statement about Gothic etymology. As part of his classicizing style, Procopius glosses a term, ῥῆξ, because it is Latinate; nevertheless, the term had been familiar in Greek transliteration for centuries and was current in Late Antiquity.⁵⁶ Procopius describes use of the word as a custom of 'the barbarians' in recognition of the ubiquity of the title throughout the various kingdoms, not as an etymological observation.⁵⁷ The point of the passage, and specifically of Procopius's use of the Latinate term, is to stress Theoderic's restraint in not taking the title βασιλέως, i.e. emperor. Elsewhere, he prefers stylistically the Greek term βασιλέως for the title of the Vandal king Gelimer when composing a fictive epistle — an inconsistency signalling his lack of interest in alleged barbarian constitutional forms.⁵⁸ Procopius gives no support for *rex* as a Gothicism. Subsidiary arguments based on Gothic philology and Latin phonetics do not change this.⁵⁹ There is no reason to see

⁵⁴ After Tarquin: Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, ed. by R. S. Conway and others, 5 vols (Oxford, 1914–65), vol. I, II 1.9. Late imperial use of *rex*: Lothar Wickert, 'Princeps', *RE*, XXII.2 (1954), §VIII B.6, pp. 2108–18; Werner Suerbaum, *Vom antiken zum frühmittelalterlichen Staatsbegriff*, 3rd edn (Münster, 1977), pp. 285–87; S. Fanning, 'Emperors and Empires in Fifth-Century Gaul', in *Fifth-Century Gaul*, pp. 288–97.

⁵⁵ Proc., *Wars*, V 1.26.

⁵⁶ E. A. Sophocles, *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, vol. II (1887; repr. New York, 1957) p. 969 s.v.; G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961), p. 1216 s.v.; to which add Malalas, *Chronographia*, ed. by L. Dindorf (Bonn, 1831), pp. 431, 451; *Chronicon Paschale*, ed. by L. Dindorf (Bonn, 1832), pp. 532, 604–05; conciliar references at PG 40.472 n. 58; and note Proc., *Wars*, V 23.3 (name of military unit). See also Chrysos, 'The Title βασιλεύς', pp. 36–38, 56–57.

⁵⁷ Cf. Proc., *Wars*, VI 14.38.

⁵⁸ Proc., *Wars*, III 9.20; cf. 24.3. On letters in Procopius: Averil Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (London, 1985), pp. 148–49.

⁵⁹ Gothic philology: to Wolfram, *Intitulatio*, pp. 39–40 (cf. Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, pp. 580–81), the Celtic loan-word *reiks* superseded Gothic *þiudans* as the term for ruler. But there is no evidence in Gothic texts for *reiks* as 'king' (D. H. Green, *Language and History in the Early Germanic World* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 121–40, esp. pp. 139–40; pp. 150–51). In the Gothic Bible, βασιλέως is translated *þiudans*, whereas *reiks* stands for the more general ἄρχων (e.g. Mark 15. 2, 9, 12, 18, 26, 32; Matthew 9. 18, 23; F. L. Stamm, *Ulfilas oder die uns erhaltenen Denkmäler der gotischen Sprache*, ed. by Ferdinand Wrede, 12th edn (Paderborn, 1913)); similarly, in the fragmentary Gothic liturgical calendar, *þiudans* glosses *augustus* (most conveniently: Peter Heather and John Matthews, *The Goths in the Fourth Century*, TTH,

rex, which neither appears suddenly with the arrival of Germanic settlers on Roman territory nor is restricted to them, as an isolated intrusion of Gothic into the late antique political lexicon.⁶⁰ The western kings patently used familiar Latin terminology, assigned to them by the Roman world in which they operated.

The title *rex* in the fifth and sixth centuries is not best understood through Germanic philology (or through the usage of writers such as Isidore of Seville⁶¹). It is more appropriate to see the term in the context of its imperial and late antique usage. Romans may have eschewed kings in their earliest history, but they dealt with *reges* all through their long imperial years. The 'client king', ruler of buffer regions adjacent Roman

11 (Liverpool, 1991), pp. 128–30). Names ending in *-ric* were popular with the royalty of the western kingdoms (Green, *Language and History*, p. 150), but were not exclusive to them (I count over thirty in the non-royal prosopography of Amory, *People and Identity*, pp. 355–440, including names in *-rit* and *-rid*, on which see below).

Latin phonetics: Wolfram, *Intitulatio*, p. 42 claims the spelling of *rex* as *rix* on some Ostrogothic coinage as 'positive evidence' for the assonance of *rex* and *reiks*. This is only an example of the most widespread phonetic change in late antique Latin, the collapse of long *e* and short *i*, most clearly evidenced in inscriptions (Jósef Herman, *Vulgar Latin*, trans. by Roger Wright (University Park, PA, 2000), pp. 4, 19), and not particular to this word.

The rough similarity of meaning between *rex* and *reiks* appears to have been recognized by at least one court poet, and exploited as a novel poetic flourish (*Anthologia latina*, ed. by D. R. Shackleton Bailey (Stuttgart, 1982), p. 206: the calque *Vandalirice potens* opens a short panegyric delivered to the Vandal king Hilderic; the poet nevertheless goes on to praise exclusively Hilderic's Theodosian ancestry). Actual pronunciation of Gothic, however, may have precluded the apparent assonance of the two words suggested by their written forms: though *c* and *þ* are not phonetically related, they appear at least sometimes to have been interchangeable when used as the final consonant in the second element of personal names, with the aspirant *þ* sometimes rendered *-t* or *-d* in Latin texts: note the rendering in Latin and Gothic of the name of the Ostrogothic scribe Viliarius/Wiljariþ, presumably the same person (Tjäder II, 96); other Gothic names attested in both *-ric* and *-rit* forms (Amory, *People and Identity*, 'Prosopography', s.vv. Ghiveric/Giberit, Odericus/Oderit, Ruderit/Rodericus); and the frequent rendering of Theoderic I of Toulouse (but not Theoderic II or their Ostrogothic homonym) as Theoderid (MGH AA XIII, 494, s.v.). For a perhaps more likely case of assimilation of *rex* with a vernacular term (in Irish): Alex Woolf, 'Community, Identity and Kingship in Early England', in *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. by William O. Frazer and Andrew Tyrrell (London, 2000), pp. 93–96.

⁶⁰ Chroust, *Untersuchungen*, p. 27, similarly saw *Flavius* as a Gothic title, a Latinate transliteration of an (unattested) Gothic word meaning 'lord'; consequently the appearances of *Flavius* and Latin *dominus* must be mutually exclusive. In fact, the two appear together in several Spanish Visigothic texts. The daunting numbers of non-Germanic *Flavii* in *PLRE* II, 474–76 (*PLRE* III omits *Flavius* as a headword, as too numerous) dispel the possibility that the name is a covert Germanicism.

⁶¹ Isidore: Wolfram, *Intitulatio*, pp. 32–33.

borders, was a constant and necessary element of Roman imperialism under the republic and principate, diminishing in importance as a result of the final stages of Roman expansionism. A review of the nature of the 'client king' relationship has suggested that, despite significant changes in conditions over the centuries, aspects of this relationship applied also to the late imperial period.⁶² Terms drawn from the formula by which allied kings were recognized, *rex sociusque et amicus*, recur in the terminology of fifth- and sixth-century sources.⁶³ More significantly, a description of the elements of 'clientage' under the early empire finds many echoes in Late Antiquity: the grant of tracts of land and indeed whole kingdoms to kings, in exchange for the king's stable administration of the region as an alternative to the imposition of a Roman governor; Roman military support for allied dynasties (Justinian's pretext for his wars in North Africa, Italy, and Spain); fluidity between the holding of Roman offices and kingship (reminiscent of the Burgundian kings Gundioc, Gundobad, and Sigismund, and the Ostrogothic Theoderic, all sometime *magistri militum* or patricians or both).⁶⁴ The fundamental purpose of the allied king relationship, from the Roman viewpoint, was to relieve the empire of the burden of administering distant or difficult areas; the fifth-century settlements of allied peoples in the western provinces may have been analogous.⁶⁵ The *mutanda* are not insignificant; but Roman foreign relations and their involvement in the domestic politics of allied states is an informative and obvious context within which to view the newly established kingdoms of the fifth and sixth centuries. Roman usage applied the familiar

⁶² David Braund, *Rome and the Friendly King: The Character of the Client Kingship* (London, 1984), p. 6.

⁶³ Braund, *Rome and the Friendly King*, pp. 23–24; cf. F. M. Clover, 'Geiseric the Statesman: A Study of Vandal Foreign Policy' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1966), p. 100 n. 1.

⁶⁴ Braund, *Rome and the Friendly King*, pp. 84–85 (fluidity of Roman office and kingship), 182–87 (survey, including grants of land). During the principate, many allied kingdoms were annexed by Rome, but there is at least one example of the reverse: a Roman province converted to a kingdom (*ibid.*, p. 187, citing Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire* (Baltimore, 1976), pp. 38–39). Cf. for later 'clientage' (to the sixth century): Chrysos, 'The Title βασιλεύς', pp. 36–46.

Also familiar are the adoption of Roman name patterns by client kings (the *tria nomina* in republican and early imperial times, *Flavius* from the fifth century onwards), and kings' self-presentation within their realms as 'friends' of the emperor (e.g. the presence of the eastern envoy Symmachus at the consular celebrations in Rome of Theoderic's intended successor (Cassiodorus, *Chronicle*, MGH AA XI, *sub anno* 519); Clovis's much-remarked 'consular' procession (Gregory of Tours, *Hist.*, II 38); cf. Cass. *Var.* I 1, VIII 1; Avitus, *Epp.* 78, 93, 94).

⁶⁵ Braund, *Rome and the Friendly King*, pp. 184–85; cf. the much debated suggestion of Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*, pp. 251–55, on which see now Michael Kulikowski, 'Roman Identity and the Visigothic Settlement in Gaul', in *Culture and Society in Late Antique Gaul*, ed. by Ralph W. Mathisen and Danuta Shanzer (Aldershot, 2001).

term for a foreign ruler to the somewhat novel circumstances of barbarian rule on imperial territory.

A similar point may be true too for the second part of the familiar literary titles we associate with kings' titles, the ethnic qualifiers. For most of the large barbarian groups active in the fifth century, smaller associations are attested: Greuthungians, Tervingians, Vesi, and Taifali who were considered Goths; Silingi and Hasdingi, both deemed Vandals; the Chamavi, Bructeri, Chattuari, Chatti, Amsivarii, Tubantes, Salii, and others among the Franks.⁶⁶ The grouping of these and doubtless other unattested peoples into 'Goths', 'Vandals', or 'Franks' may well have been a function not of barbarian coalescence but of Roman labelling, using a limited and doubtless not very accurate lexicon to reduce into comprehensible categories the heterogeneous peoples confronting imperial authorities and provincials. When Orosius calls Athaulf and Vallia *Gothorum rex*, he is not reflecting the kings' preferred style of titulature, but merely using ready terms of convenience, both for their office and for the people they led; Procopius explicitly states that 'Vandal' was a catch-all name for several barbarian peoples in North Africa.⁶⁷ Roman contemporaries perceived certain features which grouped different barbarians together; to Agathias, Burgundians were 'Gothic', not 'Frankish'; descendants of Goths who did not depart the eastern provinces to the West in either 401 or 488 remained Goths in contemporaries' eyes and presumably their own, despite their separation from ruling dynasties.⁶⁸ In modern multicultural societies, dominant ethnic-cultural groups characteristically lack specific knowledge or even interest in differentiations among widely divergent immigrant communities, and use broad, generic, ethnic labels to tag such communities by perceived commonalities. The shift from specific to generic labels in the sources may well reflect, not barbarian self-identification or political processes, but Roman usage. The point cannot be proven, as the non-Roman side of this relationship is forever mute.⁶⁹ But the thoroughly Latinate title *rex Francorum* need not be a

⁶⁶ For Franks: Zöllner, *Geschichte der Franken*, pp. 1–43.

⁶⁷ Orosius, *Hist.*, VII 43.2, 15; Proc., *Wars*, III 5.21. See also Goffart, p. 25, n. 17 above for earlier generic tribal names.

⁶⁸ Agathias, *The Histories*, trans. by Joseph D. Frendo (Berlin, 1975), I 3.3. For eastern Goths: e.g. *Euphemia and the Goth*, trans. by F. C. Burkitt (Oxford, 1913); *Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua*, 71, 93–95; Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, *Chronicle*, trans. by Witold Witakowski, TTH, 22 (Liverpool, 1996), pp. 25, 32; Jordanes, *Getica*, 267 (*Gothi minores*); Theophanes, *Chronicle*, trans. by Cyril Mango and Roger Scott (Oxford, 1997), AM 6207 (*Gothograeci*). Procopius considered Alani and Rugi as Gothic: *Wars*, III 1.1; V 1.3; VII 2.1.

⁶⁹ The references in the fragmentary Gothic liturgical calendar to martyrdoms *ana Gutþiadai* (Heather and Matthews, *Goths in the Fourth Century*, pp. 128–30) provides a vernacular term for 'in Gothic territory' or 'among the Gothic people', but not necessarily an indigenous concept: Roman writers had referred to Christian communities among the Goths as the Church in *Gothia* since the early fourth century (Socrates, *Kirchengeschichte*, ed. by G. C. Hansen, *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte*, n.s., I (Berlin, 1995), II 41; *Passio*

barbarian self-definition; it is at least as likely to be an internalization by the Frankish monarchy of a defining term imposed upon it 'from below', by the Roman populace which dominated the civil administration, Church, and other institutions of their polity.⁷⁰ We can call this shift in terminology 'ethnogenesis' if we like, but we had much better not, if that term carries implications of tribal traditions.

The question here is not whether ethnicity was innate or constructed, but whether it was a central and motivating political force. The evidence of titulature at least does not support the contention that it was. Military force, not an ambiguous ideology of ethnicity, established and maintained the barbarian elites. Attempts to read the varying titulatures of early medieval kings as fixed, constitutional formulae valid across centuries in all the western kingdoms, and projecting 'Germanic' conceptions of rulership, are tendentious. Where ethnic titles were used by rulers, they generally appear well after the devolution of the western provinces onto new rulers; this is likely an important development, but one removed in time from barbarian traditions. The patterns of usage differ so significantly, in the instances where it was used and even in the form of the title, as to preclude the likelihood that the varying titulatures participated in shared or even parallel 'discourses' bidding for loyalty among the western kingdoms. Instead, the ethnic titulature of Frankish charters and Lombard legal collections may flag concerns to assert the unity of these divided realms. The most obvious function of ethnic titles was as political labels commonly used to identify rulers of the different states, quite innocent of any implications of a covert *Traditionskern*. Propagandistic projections of ethnic identities — for example, in the Visigothic church councils — assimilate this common label with concepts of the Christian *populus* derived from Old Testament models: a salvific, not an ethnic, discourse of authority. *Rex* or *dominus noster* were the political vernacular of the early medieval kingdoms.

s. *Sabae* in Hippolyte Delehaye, 'Saints de Thrace et de Mésie', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 31 (1912), pp. 216–21, §§ 1, 3, 4); the Gothic term may be a translation of this ecclesiastical generalization.

⁷⁰ Cf. Wallace-Hadrill, *Long-Haired Kings*, pp. 148–49: *Franci* a third-century Roman 'term of convenience'; modified in idem, *Early Medieval Kingship in England and on the Continent* (Oxford, 1971), p. 16 to a term 'applied by [the Franks] themselves and by the Romans'.

Two distant analogies are the practice in the late Roman and Sassanian Persian armies of using ethnic terms to denote administrative units of the army (Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pp. 162–63, 331–32: *Visi* and *Tervingi* units in *Not. dig.*; *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. III, pt. 2, ed. by Ehsan Yarshater (Cambridge, 1983), p. 765, cf. p. 731: regional commanders known as *Alānshāh*); and, in Merovingian and Carolingian Francia, the calcification of the ethnic name *Burgundi* into an administrative/geographic unit.

Visions of National Greatness: Medieval Images, Ethnicity, and Nationalism in Finland, 1905–1945

DEREK FEWSTER

As can be gathered from its title, this paper does not deal with actual medieval developments or realities. My intention is to focus on how medieval society was perceived by, and presented for, the Finnish public during the first half of the twentieth century. My main emphasis is on popular images of the past and their origins, rather than the vast field of seemingly neutral scholarly research in professional journals and dissertations. Indeed, as most medievalists took active part in the cultural and political life of the period, their views are inevitably represented in the popular source material — the encyclopaedias, school books, historical novels, adventure stories, magazine and newspaper articles, plays, speeches, wall charts, cartoons, monuments, and paintings — either directly or diffused, cited, or summarized.

The medievalists concerned, like the historians Jalmari Jaakkola and Väinö Voionmaa, are seldom thought of as the creators of new images of the past. Yet they were in fact manufacturers of the Middle Ages, producers of interpretations useful for the social and political environment of the Finnish ethnic majority. The case of Finnish medievalism rested on a public conception of a meaningful and uniform history: the destiny of Finland. This historical idea was shared by politicians, scholars, journalists, authors, painters, and teachers alike; their common denominator was a sentiment for ethnic nationalism.

The want of historical sources made possible the interpolation, imagination, and invention of medieval Finland. The bishop's archive was gutted in 1318 by the Slavs of Novgorod. Much went up in flames in 1697 when Stockholm castle burned down, and again in 1827 when the town of Åbo/Turku nearly disappeared from the map in a disastrous fire which wiped out, among other things, the university library. The lack of

preserved documentation has facilitated all kinds of speculations and politically adapted images, as we shall see.

Basics of Finnish Nationalism

The period in question, some forty years long, saw a great surge in nationalist sentiment and historiography in Finland. Ethnic nationalism was nothing new to the Finns at the time. The philosophical notion of a national history had been introduced in the mid-nineteenth century, and had ever since been in a continuous state of change as new needs for history arose.¹

In the early nineteenth century, the Finns were not considered to have had any history of their own. When the spiritual splendour of Finnish language and culture was revealed for the enlightened Swedish-speaking scholars in Finland during the mid-nineteenth century, historical emphasis was given to describing the traditions, folk poetry, and material culture of the ancient Finnish people (*kansa*) and the key elements of the timeless *Volksgeist*, the national spirit (*kansallishenki*). With the active Russification of Finnish society towards the turn of the century, it became important for the Finns to show that the region had always been part of the civilized Western world. Even medieval traditions were important: professional archaeology was introduced expressly for the research of medieval sites — churches, castles, and monasteries — of the Swedish period. The cultural history of the grand duchy was of great value for the Finnish cause, more so than any ancient military feats or political achievements (illus. 1).

The growing nationalist movement had struggled against the lingering Swedish language of the higher estates since the 1860s and against the Russian administration since the 1890s, until the region, rather by chance, achieved independence in 1917. In 1918, a brief but horrendous civil war ensued, as the land became divided between the socialist 'reds' and the conservative 'whites'. The conservative government came off

¹ Recent critical surveys of Finnish history include, for the grand duchy: Matti Klinge, *Finlands historia*, vol. III (Esbo, 1996); for the republic: Henrik Meinander, *Finlands historia*, vol. IV (Esbo, 1999). Not surprisingly, quite a few twentieth-century books on general Finnish history are coloured by a nationalist undertone which considers the national awakening (*kansallinen herääminen*) a necessity, bringing Finland to its rightful place among nations. On this subject: Max Engman, 'Historikerna och nationalstaten', in *Historien og historikerne i Norden efter 1965: Oplæg fra den 21. Nordiske fagkonference i historisk metodelære, Åland, 27.-31. maj 1989*, ed. by Christian Kvium, *Studier i Historisk Metode*, 21 (Århus, 1991), pp. 41–63, 155–56; idem, 'Finns and Swedes in Finland', in *Ethnicity and Nation Building in the Nordic World*, ed. by Sven Tägil (London, 1995), pp. 179–216; and idem, 'The Finland-Swedes: A Case of a Failed National History?', in *National History and Identity: Approaches to the Writing of National History in the North-East Baltic Region: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. by Michael Branch, *Studia Fennica Ethnologica*, 6 (Helsinki, 1999), pp. 166–77.

victorious after several months, with the help of a German expeditionary force. Despite the devastating psychological consequences of the struggle, this was just the final trial of the nationalist cause in Finland. As the romantic notion of a homogeneous Finnish people dissolved in the spring of 1918, reuniting the supposed *ethnie* became an ideological consideration paramount to all others. The 'confused' parts of the Finnish people were to be brought back in line and led into a national 'white' unity again. It even became socially unacceptable to call the war 'Civil'; it was to be named 'The War of Liberty' (*Vapaussota*), while the internecine activities of 1918 were toned down as much as feasible.

By the end of 1918, Finland had a long history of fierce internal conflicts: radical Finnish speakers against conservative Swedish speakers, almost everyone against the former Russian administration and culture, and finally the 'whites' against the surviving 'reds'. These conflicts did not subside within the fresh Republic of Finland. The political victors of the independent country, the Finnish-speaking nationalists of the so-called 'White Finland' or 'First Republic', were not interested in a multicultural, multilingual, or even a vaguely Social Democratic state: the strength and future of Finland lay in a united and uniform people, well acquainted with the obligations of a common history, both ancient and recent.

The hardships of World War I and the climax of 1917–1918 changed the need for history dramatically. Suddenly the main issue was to create an ideologically approved past for a young nation, situated between a culturally abandoned motherland in the West and a revolutionary threat in the East. As a consequence, national history turned inwards and became teleological, as the purpose of all human history became the creation of the sovereign state of Finland, giving the Finnish *Volksgeist* a home. All developments were regarded as contributing to this national necessity, and any political aspect of Swedish or Russian history could be discarded as temporary and passing, mere parentheses in Finnish history. The common interpretation of the historical 'borders of Finland' illustrates this quite well. A school book of 1942 presents these 'Finnish' borders in a series of maps showing the gradual growth of national territory from the first set border against the east of 1323, through the age of (Swedish) greatness in the seventeenth century, to the contemporary borders. All Finland is depicted black and lost in 1809, but the national territory reappears, with some added regions, at the peace treaty of 1921. The losses of 1940 are shown in the final frame, but all the maps have the border of 1921 superimposed, indicating the extent of the supposed natural and correct national state, which, at the time the book was printed, was to be reinstated with German help.²

² Einar W. Juva, K. Merikoski, and Alfred Salmela, *Itä-Karjalan vaiheita* [*Stages of East Karelia*] (Helsinki, 1942), p. 32. The Swedish borders chosen are those of 1323, 1595, 1617, 1721, and 1743, while 1809 instated the Russian Emperor as grand duke of Finland. The border of 1921 was the first set border of the republic and 1940 displayed the losses after the Winter War of 1939–40.

The focus of history turned towards finding developments which somehow led forward to inevitable independence. Finland became the self-sufficient, eternal bulwark of the Western world in the North: regional history with peasant hardships and uprisings, officers betraying their Swedish king for the good of the nation, and the fortunes of Finnish soldiers in the Thirty Years War were of great importance for the nationalist cause. Even archaeology turned away from medieval symbols of foreign Swedish power, and concentrated on prehistoric or early medieval sites considered to be purely Finnish or Finno-Ugrian.

'Primeval and Medieval Finland'

How did all of this affect the perception of the Middle Ages during the first half of the twentieth century? The republic of Finland certainly still needed a medieval background, just as the grand duchy once did. Medieval history was not only a useful subject, among others, on which to superimpose contemporary ideologies, but the whole concept of a Finnish nationality rested on the certainty of an original and untainted pre-Swedish 'Finnishness' (*suomalaisuus*, German *Finnischtum*). History gave legitimation to a renewed independence.

In 1905, an archaeologist, Alfred Hackman, suggested that the Finnish tribes had arrived in Finland early in the first millennium AD. Previous scholars had dated their arrival to much later, some presenting the eighth century as the possible migration period. Hackman's theory of ethnic migration rested on the notion of an ancient Finnish *Kulturkreis* and certain previously adopted linguistic theories, all of which presented an ancient Finnish migration to the north. His theory was quickly adopted by nearly all other archaeologists and linguists.³ With his work, the conceived reality of the *Kalevala* was pushed back in time by several centuries. In an ideological sense, Hackman's theory also introduced a justification for national Finnish rule in the region. His migration theory implied that the Finns were the oldest remaining settlers in the country, with about a millennium of political independence before the Swedish conquest and the ensuing long night of foreign rule. The tumultuous years of 1917–1918 only reinstated the natural order of things.

³ Alfred Hackmann, *Die ältere Eisenzeit in Finnland*, vol I: *Die Funde aus den fünf ersten Jahrhunderten n. Chr.* (Helsinki, 1905). For a recent survey of the language and migration theories, see Kaisa Häkkinen, *Suomalaisten esihistoria kielitieteen valossa* [*The Prehistory of the Finns in the Light of Linguistics*], Tietolipas, 147 (Helsinki, 1996), pp. 77–84. In the early twentieth century, only two Social Democrat archaeologists, Väinö Wallin (later Voionmaa) and Julius Ailio, both influenced by evolutionism, claimed a national development in Finland from the Stone Age. On this issue, see also Derek Fewster, 'The Invention of the Finnish Stone Age: Politics, Ethnicity and Archaeology', in *Dig It All: Papers Dedicated to Ari Siiridäinen*, ed. by Matti Huurre (Helsinki, 1999), pp. 13–20.

Medieval Finland was fundamental for the nationalist paradigm. The early Middle Ages had been the previous Golden Age of the Finnish tribes, regretfully never united, but glorious in their own right. As the so-called Swedish crusades ended in 1293, the first independence of the tribal kingdoms of the Finns, Tavasts, and Karelians was lost. What the *Kalevala* presented as epic folk poetry was considered historically true: a surviving tale of medieval heroes which could be illustrated with archaeological artefacts. Surviving only in distant Karelia, the epic provided endless proof of the original Finnish culture. The impact of the *Kalevala*, the Karelian landscape, and the local traditions can not be underestimated in considering how the image of medieval Finland was created.⁴ Some scholars even wrote seriously of an Iron Age and early medieval 'Kalevala-culture' as an archaeological and historical entity.⁵ The *Kalevala* is in fact a modified and constructed compilation, written to a considerable degree by its nineteenth-century 'collector', Elias Lönnrot. As the symbolic value of the book transcended any critical considerations, the extent of nineteenth-century work put into creating the *Kalevala* remained quite unknown to the public until after the Second World War, and was often disregarded by scholars (illus. 2).⁶

But history, or political needs, called for more than medieval Finnish independence and past poetic excellence. Ancient settlements justified the reinstatement of Finnish ethnic rule in Finland and the further creation of a 'Greater Finland'. As the nationalist movement was based upon a nineteenth-century construction of an ethnic family of languages, the 'Finno-Ugrian language tree', there was also a nearly immediate public outcry for a military expansion of independent Finland. The ideal state should unite several of the forlorn Finno-Ugrian regions under the protection of Finland. The Finns now had the obligation to defend both themselves and, like responsible big brothers,

⁴ A rare but outstanding example of critical scholarship regarding the connection between nationalism and the uses of the *Kalevala* and Finnish folklore is William A. Wilson, *Folklore and Nationalism in Modern Finland* (Bloomington, 1976). For recent discussions of the issue, see Pertti Anttonen, 'Cultural Homogeneity and the National Unification of a Political Community', in *Folklore, Heritage Politics and Ethnic Diversity: A Festschrift for Barbro Klein*, ed. by Pertti Anttonen and others (Botkyrka, 2000); Seppo Knuuttila, 'Sankariaika suomalaisessa kansanrunoudentutkimuksessa 1930-luvulla' ['The Heroic Age in Finnish Folklore Research during the 1930s'], in *Ajan paineessa: Kirjoituksia 1930-luvun suomalaisesta aatemaailmasta*, ed. by Pertti Karkama and Hanne Koivisto, SKST, 758 (Helsinki, 1999).

⁵ The professor of history Jalmari Jaakkola wrote a 500-page book on this subject: Jalmari Jaakkola, *Suomen varhaishistoria: Heimokausi ja 'Kalevala-kulttuuri'* [*The Early History of Finland: The Tribal Period and the 'Kalevala-Culture'*], Suomen historia, 2 (Porvoo, 1935).

⁶ See the extensive study by Väinö Kaukonen, *Elias Lönnrotin Kalevalan toinen painos* [*The Second Edition of Lönnrot's Kalevala*], SKST 247 (Helsinki, 1956). Kaukonen has deconstructed the *Kalevala* line by line, comparing the available sources of written notes of original folklore with the second edition of the *Kalevala*, and has disposed the notion of the work being a timeless epic of the Finnish *ethnie*; as such it was born on Lönnrot's writing table.

their supposed racial relatives against the great threat of the East. Accordingly, during the years 1918–1922, Finnish volunteers organized several military expeditions to neighbouring areas which were Soviet-held but ethnically Finno-Ugrian. All failed, and no areas were annexed. As a result of Finnish frustration, however, an irredentist society, the *Academic Society of Karelia* (often abbreviated AKS), was founded in 1922 for the reinstatement of ancient Greater Finland. The membership of the society soon amounted to thousands of university students, and the AKS continued to gather youths aspiring to enforce and strengthen Finnishness in Finland, to push the Soviet border far away, and to create in its place an *Imperium Fennicum*.⁷ Finland sought to expand its borders again during 1941–1944, with poor results. The 1920s and 1930s also saw several right-wing, fascist, and even Nazi-inspired movements and organizations draw their strength from a nationalist notion of a pure Finnishness, ancient, ethnic, and linguistic.⁸

It is hardly surprising that the period 1918–1944 brought no moderation to any of the hardcore nationalist currents. The construction of a Finnish past, and a medieval ethnicity, was definitely and permanently linked to the political and ideological system which approved school history books, awarded prizes for historical novels, and published edifying illustrations. The imagery was quite homogeneous; the core of the Finnish paradigm remained intact throughout this period, despite certain developments within the nationalist movements. The only other attempt to build a competing ethnicity, with a strikingly different explanation of Finnish history, was the medievalism of the Swedish-speaking minority around the turn of the century. As an act of ideological self-defence, the remaining Swedish-speaking elite turned to a notion of Germanic race and heritage, spiced with a Viking identity, borrowing most of its symbols and props from Scandinavia. The glow of this movement, however, soon faded out into local

⁷ The basic work on the AKS is still Risto Alapuro, *Akateeminen Karjala-Seura: Yioppilasliike ja kansa 1920- ja 1930-luvulla* [*The Academic Society of Karelia: The Student Movement and the People in the 1920s and 1930s*], Valtiotieteellisen yhdistyksen julkaisusarja: Poliittikan tutkimuksia, 14 (Porvoo, 1973). Matti Klinge has written about the society on several occasions; see e.g. his *Helsingfors universitet 1917–1990*, Helsingfors universitet 1640–1990 vol. III (Helsinki, 1991); idem, *Studenter och idéer: Studentkåren vid Helsingfors universitet 1828–1960*, vol IV: 1917–1960 ([Helsinki], 1979). The roll of the society was published in *Neljätuhatta veljestä, sataneljä elämäntarinaa: AKS:läinen elämäkerrasto* [4000 Brothers, 104 Life Stories: A Biography of the AKS], ed. by Matti Kuusi and Ville-Paavo Aitola (Porvoo, 1991). Of some four thousand known members, the most prominent are here provided with a biography; the display of high ranking politicians and academics suggests the tremendous influence the AKS had on Finnish history through most of the twentieth century.

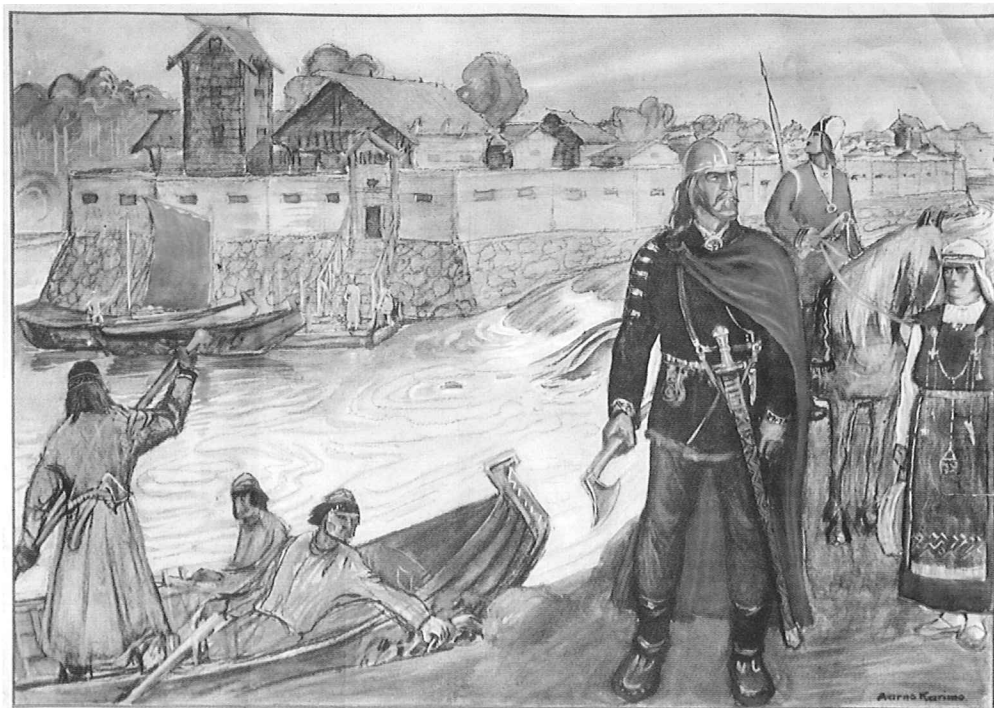
⁸ On the extreme right wing in Finland before 1944, see Henrik Ekberg, *Führerns trogna följeslagare: Den finländska nazismen 1932–1944* ([Helsinki], 1991), especially the foundation letters of the associations in the appendices, pp. 322–47. True Finnishness was defined in various ways, including common blood, destiny, spirit, language, and tribal descent.



1. Undated but apparently late-nineteenth-century photograph of the dramatic dialogue *Svenskan och Finskan* [*The Swedish and the Finnish*, 1860] by Josef Julius Wecksell (1838–1907). A young and aggressive Finn in furs meets an old and haughty Swede in helmet in an allegory of the two battling cultures of Finland. NBA, The Archives for Prints and Photographs, Neg. 95761. Photo by NBA.



2. A fund-raising postcard for the Boy Scouts of Finland. The ghost of the mythical warrior Lemminkäinen is skiing alongside the boy. The comical song text refers to an episode in the *Kalevala* but shows some discomfort in combining ancient fervour and heroism with juvenile health education. The melody is given as 'Singing ai ai jippi jippi jaa' ('She'll be comin' round the mountain when she comes'). NBA, The Archives for Prints and Photographs, Sign. 9.VIII.60. Photo by NBA.



3. The Karelian tribal fortress of 'Tiurin linna', on a wall chart for schools, by Aarno Karimo. A tribal king or chieftain of the Karelians, a mounted warrior, and a matron-like free woman in an archaeologically reconstructed dress dominate the scene. The king wears red, black, and green, the colours of the East-Karelian state, never realised during the 'Tribe Wars' of 1918–1922. His appearance has more imagined features than archaeological. Aarno Karimo, *Tiurin linna*, Suomen historiallinen kuvasto, 6 (Helsinki, 1934). Private collection, photo by Janne Rentola. © Sabam.



4. Second edition of a needlework pattern sheet of 1900, with a coloured illustration of an early medieval Karelian dress, originally reconstructed by an archaeologist for theatrical use in the early 1890s, but later known as the Aino-dress and frequently used at banquets and festivities. The dress was copied in great amounts and can still at times be seen in public use. *Suomalaisia kansallispukuja: 16 väripainosta ja selittävä teksti* [*Finnish Folk Costumes: Sixteen Colour Plates and Explanations*], ed. by Theodor Schvindt (Helsinki, 1902), plate 1. Photo by Janne Rentola.



Biskop Henrik ja Lalli. — Biskop Henrik och Lalli.

5. 'Bishop Henry and Lalli', a wall chart for use in schools from c. 1928. The hero of the picture is actually the man with the axe, Lalli, who is about to kill the Englishman Henry, the first known missionary bishop of Finland. E. Jaatinen, *Piispa Henrik ja Lalli: Biskop Henrik och Lalli* (Helsinki, [1928?]). Helsinki University Library, photo by Helsinki University Audiovisual centre.

«Mitä sinä sillä tarkoitat?» tiuskasi Pohto ja hänen poskipäänsä tummuivat kiukusta.

«Arvelin vaan, että se joka jää tänne makaamaan ei tarvitse enää venettä», vastasi Matti tyynesti.



Jättiläismäisen Pohdon kasvot väristyivät raivosta ja koska itäläiset eivät koskaan ole olleet mielensä herroja siinä määrin kuin lännen miehet, unhotti hän kokonaan kaksinkamppailun vaatimukset, tempasi suuren miekkansa ja hui-tasi vastustajansa päätä kohti mahtavan iskun. Mutta no-

6. The archetype for the good Finnish nobleman, Matti Kurki, smiting the Russian giant Pohto even after losing an arm. Drawing by Rafael Rindell, in Santeri Ivalo and Kyösti Wilkuna, *Suomalaisia sankareita: Historiallisia kertomuksia* [*Finnish Heroes: Historical Tales*], illus. by Eric Vasström and Rafael Rindell, 2nd edn (Helsinki, 1918), p. 15. Photo by Janne Rentola.



7. 'Against the East'. The defence of the Finnish hillfort of Rapola, depicted by Aarno Karimo, in the extremely popular and thoroughly illustrated book *Kumpujen yöstä*. The attacking Russians all wear red dresses and are shown with distinctly un-Finnish racial markers. The Finnish chieftain Karu stands calm amidst the carnage. Karimo, *Kumpujen yöstä*, I, 255. Photo by Janne Rentola. © Sabam.



8. Cover by Ahto Numminen of an adventure story in which the Karelian equivalent of the Swedish *leding*-fleet finds America in the tenth century. The ships are apparently Viking ships, further emphasizing the use of a synthetic construction in imagining a 'possible' early medieval Finland. Yrjö Kohonen, *Länteen: Kertomus rohkeista suomalaisista, jotka löysivät uuden mantereen, nykyisen Amerikan* [*To the West: A Tale of the Brave Finns who Found a New Continent, the Present America*], Poikien seikkailukirjasto, 74 (Helsinki, 1937). Photo by Helsinki University Audiovisual centre.

communities, as legislation in the name of national reconciliation secured the overall status of the minority within the independent republic.⁹

Images of Medieval Nationalism

Published written and visual representations of medieval Finland, intended for the general public and especially for impressionable school children (that is, for the boys needed in the future to defend and develop the nation), present several key elements of national images. The creation and publication of these images for the benefit of the literate but non-academic Finnish *kansa*, the *Volk*, was not obstructed by the apparent paucity of archaeological and historical sources; the construction of nationhood was at stake. The following survey and the statements presented are based on an exposition of the adventure stories, school readings, school wall charts, plays, popular encyclopaedic essays, and other representations published in 1905–1945. The ‘medieval Finland’ considered here is, in a way, a chronologically extended Viking Age, although the standard periodization of national history would conventionally label the time before the first ‘crusade’ of the 1150s ‘prehistoric’. Late medieval images and settings are, however, quite rare in the material discussed; the period before and during the ‘crusades’ was of much greater national interest and therefore dominated illustrations and texts, regardless of any chronological name tags.

The cultural landscape, the setting for ‘medieval Finland’, is predominantly the hamlet, the deep forest, and the lake. Only rarely is a farming community described, even if the Finns are presented as earth-bound; the ‘farmers’ are free, but rarely portrayed as farming. Usually they are fighting, hunting, or collecting taxes from subject Saami tribes. The inferior and brachycephalic ‘Lapps’ are treated as a natural obstruction, subject to acts of violence; they are seldom equals and often depicted enslaved or subdued. Only authors brought up in the north, like Santeri Ivalo or Kaarlo Hänninen, show any sympathy with their hardships.¹⁰

The main figure of any dramatization is invariably the abstract tribe (*heimo*), incarnated as a military leader and arbitrator, the king (*kuningas*). The tribes are markedly independent, self-sufficient, and free from any foreign influence. Despite the presence and power of the wise tribal king, the rest of the Finns are presented as freeholders making the most important decisions during nearly democratic meetings at the *thing* (*käräjät*). Unity is portrayed as constructive; discord always implies future bloodshed and national losses. The tribal state is highly organized, equal to the Swedish state. We

⁹ For a history of the conceived Finnish and Swedish ethnicities in Finland, see Sten Högnäs, *Kustens och skogarnas folk: Om synen på svenskt och finskt lynne* (Stockholm, 1995).

¹⁰ Santeri Ivalo, ‘Neljän heimon kunnas’ [‘The Hill of the Four Tribes’], in *Annikki, piispa ja kesti: Keskiajan kuvia* (Porvoo, 1927); Kaarlo Hänninen, *Kuningas Äyräpää: Romaani* [*King Äyräpää: A Novel*], illus. by Eric Vasström, Koululaikirjasto, 92 (Porvoo, 1931).

find proto-parishes, a tribal navy and militia, several trading towns, a codified common law, and permanent administrative centres (illus. 3).¹¹

Finnish women are usually presented as stereotyped virgins, valkyries, heroic mothers, or treacherous wives modelled on figures such as Aino or Pohjolan emäntä in the *Kalevala*, or Scandinavian or Wagnerian archetypes. Twentieth-century Finnish women, however, did at times need to manifest their national sentiments and take part in the ancient heritage. The oldest images of early medieval Finns, based on archaeological interpretations, were published in 1887; by 1900, Finnish women were manufacturing medieval dresses, complete *Trachten*, to be used as folk costumes at feasts. In the late 1930s, some leading women were again active in reclaiming their share of medieval Finland, by organizing the professional manufacture and distribution of copies of archaeological brooches and ornaments. The firm *Kalevala koru* (Kalevala jewellery), founded in 1937, became an immediate success; now in the twenty-first century it is one of the most definite features of Finnish design to be found by a tourist on her arrival to the country. In the 1930s and 1940s, however, carrying a *Kalevala koru* ornament was a sign of adherence to a collective ethnic identity, a token of nationalist conviction (illus. 4).¹²

Throughout popular representations, all foreigners are suspect, as is anything Catholic. I have yet to find a friendly and trustworthy Russian in the Finnish visions of the ancient past. Occasionally, a missionary monk in a novel understands the good of the people, which may imply his impending premature death at the hands of the one treacherous Finn present. Some early preachers and bishops are good, but if so they are ethnic Finns, returning to their childhood landscapes. The national pagan religion is elevated and represented as deeply rooted as Lutheranism in the twentieth century. Only with the sword could Catholicism be enforced: stubborn resistance and uprisings are common subjects in novels and school readings. Later, the medieval church develops a form of national Catholicism, which is considered a good thing as it weeds out some unnecessary barbarian customs. Still, the local clergy and nobility remain Finnish at heart, and taxation is commonly hated as a form of foreign exploitation. It should be

¹¹ Tribes and chieftains dominate even in the titles. Compare Hilda Huntuvuori, *Kokemäenmaan kuningas: Historiallinen romaani* [*The King of Kokemäenmaa: A Historical Novel*] (Porvoo, 1930); Eirik Hornborg, *Hövdinganamnet: Borgungarna 2* [*The Name of a Chieftain: The Borgungs, 2*] (Helsinki, 1931); J. K. Kulomaa, *Nuori heimopäällikkö: Seikkailukertomus heimosotien ajoilta* [*The Young Tribal Chieftain: A Tale of Adventure from the Times of the Tribal Wars*], Poikien seikkailukirjasto 57 (Helsinki, 1935); Mait Metsänurk, *Mägisten nuori päällikkö* [*The Young Chieftain of Mäginen*], trans. by Elsa Enäjärvi Haavio (Jyväskylä, 1936).

¹² For a survey of dress reconstructions, see Pirkko-Liisa Lehtosalo-Hilander, *Ancient Finnish Costumes* (Helsinki, 1984), which however lacks a satisfactory analysis of the political and historical contexts of the dresses. The fascinating origins of *Kalevala koru* can be found in Anneli Mäkelä, *Ken kantaa Kalevalaa: Kalevalaisten Naisten Liitto ry 50 vuotta* [*Who Bears the Kalevala: Kalevalaisten Naisten Liitto 50 Years*] (Helsinki, 1984).

noted that two of the earliest known but semi-mythical medieval Finns, popularized in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as national heroes, belonged to the native nobility and were slayers of foreigners: Lalli, killer of the first Catholic bishop, and Matti Kurki, victor over a giant Russian.¹³ Their popularity is hardly a coincidence (illus 5 and 6).

Even high representatives of the new power could be given a reasonable name in Finnish history. Bishop Magnus Tavast and king Karl Knutsson Bonde were born in Finland and therefore acceptable, while Birger Jarl brought peace and unity to the Tavasts with the 'Second Crusade', and bishop Thomas, in the nationalist interpretation, attempted to create an independent Finnish church province, uniting the Finnish tribes; alas, he failed and Russia grew strong instead.

The main feature imposed on medieval Finland — namely by World War I, Finland's sudden independence, and the civil war — was a total militarisation of medieval society. Simultaneously with the creation of an army for the new state in 1918, the image of the early medieval period became one of incessant violence and wars: against Slavs, Vikings, Swedes, neighbouring tribes, Saami, Norwegians, and others. The medieval Finns were banded together for the defence of their villages like the newly founded national home guard of the 1920s, the *Suojeluskunta*-militia. The last centuries of medieval Finnish independence are presented as a time of war (*sota*), persecution (*vaino*), revenge (*kosto*), hate (*viha*), plunder, treason, and constant tactical decisions. Soon hillforts, warning beacons, and vigils were omnipresent in the imagery, and continued to be so into the 1940s. Some forts were even elevated to an administrative level. In this world of warfare, the first set border of 1323 against the East commanded extraordinary historical interest, as it so cruelly divided 'Greater Finland' in two. It is worth noting that not one hillfort of the hundreds adduced in the first catalogue of 1891 exhibited traces of actual fighting.¹⁴ Nor has one archaeological site of a warning beacon ever actually been found. The features just had to exist, as examples were known from the rest of Europe; they became truths when Finnish ethnicity was seen as threatened in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries (illus. 7).¹⁵

¹³ As the first navy of independent Finland was created from vessels left behind by the Russians, the two largest gunboats, *Posadnik* and *Voivoda*, were promptly renamed *Klas Horn* and *Matti Kurki*. Klas Horn was a sixteenth-century nobleman from Finland, known as a great admiral in the wars against Russia. The other major ships of the pre-Second World War navy were named after figures in the *Kalevala*.

¹⁴ Hjalmar Appelgren, *Suomen muinaislinnat*, Suomen Muinaismuisto-Yhdistyksen Aikakauskirja, 12 (Helsinki, 1891). He lists a possible total of 361 fortifications in Finland.

¹⁵ See e.g. the poems telling of hostilities spreading from all directions in Unto Karri, *Vainopurret: Balladeja* [*Sails of Persecution: Ballads*], illus. by Erkki Tantt (Jyväskylä, 1937); the twelfth-century sack of Sigtuna as described in Väinö Kainuu, *Finnit tulevat: Kertomus sotakesästä* [*The Finns are Coming: A Tale of a Summer of War*] (Porvoo, 1936); or the splendid visions of militarism of Aarno Karimo, *Kumpujen yöstä: Suomalaisia vaihteita, tekoja ja oloja kivikaudesta nykyaikaan* [*From the Night of the Barrows: Finnish Stages, Deeds, and Conditions from the Stone Age to Modern Times*], 1–2 (Porvoo, 1929–30).

Pictures of ancient Finns usually show warriors/militiamen, and the main person in any historical novel is invariably a tribal king or leader, or his son, wielding a sword or a bow like a figure out of an Icelandic *saga*. Only at rare occasions do the novels display any psychological drama, as the stories take place in times of national crises and pure bloodshed, when courage and sacrifices are needed. The only mental development of the blond hero is usually his realization of the common good of his tribe and nation; the narrative centres on his national awakening. He might possibly adopt foreign Christianity, but he is always filled with reverence to the ancient Finnish gods. Subordinate characters invariably present in this heroic national culture are the sage, modelled on Väinämöinen of the *Kalevala*, but possibly a 'bad guy' in a novel, and the master smith, modelled on Ilmarinen and always a 'good guy'. A master fur trader is also common and necessary for the myth of the Finnish forest (illus. 8).¹⁶

Conclusion

The foundation for our present knowledge of the eastern part of medieval Sweden was laid by the historians and other manufacturers of history during the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century. Anthony D. Smith and other scholars of the 'ethno-symbolist school', however, have been attempting for some years to understand nationalism by emphasizing the long traditions of national symbols, myths, values, memories, and ethnicity in general, and thus have been arguing against the purely constructed nationhood propounded by the 'modernization school' of Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, and Eric Hobsbawm. With this debate in mind, I have made an attempt to date the historical sources and influences for the constructions and images of this Finnish case study.¹⁷ The result in the table following this essay is tentative and would require even more space for explanations, but does all the same provide a first survey of the medieval symbolism concerned.

As can be seen, only a few of the 'medieval' features known to the early-twentieth-century Finnish nationalists have unquestionably ancient origins, although modern nationalists might still argue otherwise. Even regarding the actual medieval sources, the tendency has often been to stretch the material to fit an a priori postulation of a unified Finnish nationality, making one 'true' ethnic region out of what was probably several

¹⁶ Good examples of these features are Lauri Haarla, *Nuori pirkkalaispäällikkö: Historiallinen romaani* [*The Young Pirkkala Chieftain: A Historical Novel*], 2 vols (Helsinki, 1934–35); and the eight novels of the *Kultaranta*-suite by Hilda Huntuvuori (*Kultarannan Impi, Onnen kannel, Suomen apostoli, Lallin pojat, Kokemäenmaan kuningas, Piispa Tuomas, Vaeltajan virsi, and Suuri unelma*), published between 1920 and 1945, and spanning the Christian history of Finland from 900 to 1337.

¹⁷ See the recent anthology of Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford, 1999).

ancient *ethnies* or *gentes* dispersed through various regions. Some of the medieval images also originate from quite foreign sources, which have been superimposed on Finnish medieval history by way of free analogy. In the case of Finnish nationalism, the pre-existing traditions and heritages which A. D. Smith considers of great importance for the emergence of modern nationalism are questionable, scarce, and virtually negligible as far as the Middle Ages go. Both modern and medieval Finland are the results of some rather recent actions, of deliberate planning and intellectual creativity. Local medieval society is definitely an 'imagined community' of Finnish nationals. This nation does not fit well into A. D. Smith's theory of *ethnie*, even though he does compare Finland in this sense with Israel, Mexico, and Egypt and does include the *Kalevala* in several arguments for the presence of national 'memories'.¹⁸ The myths, memories, symbols, and values of representations, and the imagery so important for the Finnish nationalist cause, do not belong to any one *ethnie* which survives in a common memory; they are rather to be seen as modern academic and inspirational visions of the past, vastly expanding and popularizing scholarly emotions, traditions, and interpretations.

To conclude, I shall mention a recent exhibition catalogue, published in Finnish in 1994 and called *Terra Tavestorum: Hämeäläisten maa* [*The Land of the Tavasts*]. The forty-eight page leaflet was produced by the National Board of Antiquities for a new permanent exhibition in Hämeenlinna, a brick castle mainly from the fourteenth century with the strong symbolic value of being the root of the 'foreign' Swedish rule in the region. The exhibition presents the early 'pre-conquest' history of the region, from the Stone Age to the 'Second Crusade' in the thirteenth century. In the medieval section of the text, we stumble upon topics like 'The Hillforts: Mighty Memorials of War' and, when the 'crusade' is mentioned, 'The Administrative Organization Changes'. The medieval Tavasts are provided with a complex organization of sentinels, warning beacons, and a sizeable war fleet, all based upon a regional division in pre-Christian parishes and a common state-like gathering of the county, the 'heart of Häme' being the hillfort of Rapola. Furthermore, the Tavasts are presented as stubborn pagans, ready to take arms against taxation and the religion of the western church. Finally the Tavasts are

¹⁸ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, pp. 7, 174, 177, 181. Regarding the question Smith raises about why the low culture of the non-specialists and non-literates rejected the former high culture, it should be noted that Finnish nationalism originated from the Swedish-speaking elite, and only gradually turned to more serious goals during the nineteenth century. An aggressive nationalism became possible because the emperor of Russia and his officials gave support to the Finnish cause in attempts to fight the political consequences of continued Swedish influence in the grand duchy. Later, the Russian administration harvested a fierce and opposing Finnish nationalism, when the unification of the Russian empire became increasingly important for St Petersburg in the late nineteenth century. The revolutionary crisis of 1905 in turn activated Finnish nationalism on a grand scale. See e.g. Klinge, *Finlands historia*, III; Risto Alapuro, 'Social Classes and Nationalism: The North-East Baltic', in *National History and Identity* (n. 1 above), pp. 111–21.

subjugated, and the previous regional divisions are transformed into western medieval units. A casual 'we' relates this to 'our history', that is, to the ethnic history of Finland.¹⁹

The contents of this catalogue are quite remarkable, but not particularly exceptional even for modern Finland. The booklet belongs to a long tradition of latent nationalist historiography, mirroring the ideological and political needs of interwar Finland, including the themes of independence, military strength, cultural and economical self-sufficiency, and ethnic purity. The long shadow of this nationalist image of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries can still be found, subconsciously or not, in most modern popular representations and in quite a few scholarly works too.²⁰ The tradition of a medieval 'Greater Finland' and the golden age of the *Kalevala* also lives on among the neo-Nazi and extreme right-wing movements in Finland, easily found on the internet.

So what would remain of early medieval Finland, of the 'Finnish' ethnicity, if these lingering nationalistic tendencies of mainly the 1920s and 1930s were discarded? The answer is actually not comforting: the whole history of the medieval period prior to AD 1300 probably needs to be scrutinized and rewritten, reconsidering these questions of 'ethnicity'. I would go so far as to argue that the history of the Finnish transition from a set of rather unknown and illiterate local communities, to an established diocese of the western church and part of the Swedish kingdom, is unknown. An image of medieval Finland needs once more to be created from the sources up, despite, or actually because of, the efforts of previous historians, journalists, and teachers.

¹⁹ *Terra Tavestorum: Hämmäläisten maa*, ed. by Ritva Wäre (Helsinki, 1994).

²⁰ To name a staggering example of recent primordial nationalism, the archaeological dissertation of Pirjo Uino, *Ancient Karelia: Archaeological Studies*, Suomen muinaismuistoyhdistyksen aikakauskirja, 104 (Helsinki, 1997), starts off with a nationalist poem from 1889, invoking memories of Aarno Karimo's *Kumpujen yöstä*, and includes a condemnation of present day Karelia still being under Russian rule and populated by foreigners (p. 10). The thesis then continues to prove the high level of independence of Karelian culture and ethnicity from 1500 BC to AD 1500.

EARLY MEDIEVAL FINLAND, 1905–1945:
KEY NATIONAL ELEMENTS AND ORIGINS OF STEREOTYPES

<i>'Medieval' features</i>	<i>National(ist) symbols</i>	<i>Main sources, influences, and inspirations for interpretations (Actual or probable datable medieval sources in bold)</i>
TRIBAL INDEPENDENCE	The Swedish crusades (as end of independence)	nineteenth-century autonomy and national romantics — the independent state of 1917–1918 (as rebirth)
Lost greatness of a Golden Age	Realms of Perma/Bjarmia and Kvenland	The <i>Kalevala</i> — ninth-century itinerary in king Alfred's world history — Saxo Grammaticus
Finnish peasant freedom	The freeholder	Nordic myth of ancient <i>bondefrihet</i> — nineteenth-century necessity for ethnic Finnish nationalism
Saami inferiority and subordination	The Saami slave	nineteenth–twentieth-century general theories of racism and craniological studies
Swedish [colonial] exploitation	Taxation, e.g. <i>Ruokaruotsi</i> -tax	Some late medieval cases of unrest — the 'Club War' (<i>Nuijasota</i>): a late-sixteenth-century peasant uprising
<hr/>		
PAGAN [STATE] RELIGION	Paganism	Lutheran anti-Catholicism — the <i>Kalevala</i> — archaeological interpretations of burial customs
Slow and violent conversion	The First Crusade; Bishop Henry's death	Bulls of 1171/1172 and 1209 — late medieval church sources — seventeenth-century ballad of bishop Henry's death
Stubborn resistance and uprisings	The Second Crusade; Hakoinen hillfort	Bull of 1237 — fourteenth-century Erik's chronicle — interpretation of archaeological site at Nousiainen
A form of national Catholicism adopted	The good bishop	Ethnic Finnish bishops — late medieval church sources — Lutheran state and national church

<i>'Medieval' features</i>	<i>National(ist) symbols</i>	<i>Main sources, influences, and inspirations for interpretations (Actual or probable datable medieval sources in bold)</i>
HIGHLY ORGANIZED STATE	The wise tribal king	Late medieval counties — fourteenth-century bull mentioning a person called 'Cuningas de Rapalum'
Codified common law	The meeting of the <i>thing</i> (<i>Käräjät</i>)	Possible traces in folklore — Iron Age graves with stone circles (<i>Kärjäympyrä</i>)
Local territorial organization	Proto-parishes (<i>Pitäjät</i>)	Late medieval parishes — post-medieval local administration
Regional identity and autonomy	Counties (<i>Maakunnat</i>)	Late medieval counties and administrative regions around castles
Trading towns	Teljä, Koroinen, Rikala, and others	Various traditions, legends, and possible brief mentions in medieval sources
Centres of power	Administrative central fortifications	Unexcavated hillforts of Tiuri (in Karelia) and Rapola (in Häme/Tavastland)
Army	The tribal militia	Archaeological finds of swords and weapons — Militia of the 1920s (<i>Suojeluskunta</i>)
Navy	War fleet (<i>Uiskolaitos</i>)	The Swedish <i>ledung</i>-fleet — unknown site of ' Portus Tavastorum '-harbour
<hr/>		
CONTINUOUS STATE OF WAR	Persecution (<i>Vaino</i>), anger/hate (<i>Viha</i>)	Russification and military actions prior to independence — World War I — Civil War of 1918
Germanic enemies	Swedes, Varjags (<i>Varjakat</i>)	Some Viking sources — the nineteenth-century language struggle in Finland — nineteenth-century Scandinavianism

<i>'Medieval' features</i>	<i>National(ist) symbols</i>	<i>Main sources, influences, and inspirations for interpretations (Actual or probable datable medieval sources in bold)</i>
Slavic enemies	Russians (<i>Ryssä</i> ; <i>Vainolainen</i>)	Nestor's chronicle and other medieval sources — several sixteenth–eighteenth-century wars — Russification prior to 1918 — twentieth-century Soviet threat
Alterity	State border (<i>Pähkinäsaaren rauha</i>)	Peace of Nöteborg (Schlüsselburg) as first set border 1323 — independence and Civil War of 1918
Line of defence	Manned hill forts (<i>Muinaislinna</i>)	Forts invented in archaeological treatise of 1891 — Russification policy before 1917
Chains of communications	Warning beacons (<i>Vartiotuli</i>)	'Balagardssida' in Viking sources — Olaus Magnus — eighteenth-century telegraph systems — place-names
Ethnic discord	Internecline tribal wars	Late medieval expeditions — an ideological necessity: prime explanation for lack of a medieval state
Military equality with enemies	Wars of justified revenge	Karelian(!?) sack of Sigtuna in 1156 — the 'Tribe wars' of 1918–1922

HEROIC NATIONAL CULTURE

Wisdom of the Ancients	The soothsayer/sage (<i>Tietäjä</i>)	Väinämöinen in the <i>Kalevala</i> — the heroized Karelian singers of the <i>Kalevala</i> folk poetry
Heroic strength	The warrior (<i>Soturi</i>)	Lemminkäinen and Joukahainen in the <i>Kalevala</i> — the Militia of the 1920s (<i>Suojeluskunta</i>)
Technological self-sufficiency	The master smith (<i>Seppä</i>)	Archaeological finds of swords — Ilmarinen in the <i>Kalevala</i>
Superior control of nature	The master fur trader (<i>Pirkkalainen</i>)	Late medieval Birkarla traders — mainly a visionary construction of the historian Jalmari Jaakkola

<i>'Medieval' features</i>	<i>National(ist) symbols</i>	<i>Main sources, influences, and inspirations for interpretations (Actual or probable datable medieval sources in bold)</i>
The original way of life	Region of Karelia	Outback survival of the <i>Kalevala</i> — nineteenth-century quest for national purity in fine arts and romantic landscapes
The national memory	Poetry of the <i>Kalevala</i>	Folk poetry with some apparent medieval influences — nineteenth-century linguistic and ethnic theories
(Semi-)historical hero 1	Matti Kurki fighting the giant Pohto	Traditional story — nineteenth-/ twentieth-century authors: Z. Topelius, S. Ivalo, and K. Wilkuna describing the ethnic nobleman
(Semi-)historical hero 2	Lalli killing the first bishop of Finland	Various possibly medieval traditions — seventeenth-century ballad of bishop Henry' death — nineteenth-century anti-Catholicism

SECTION II

Ethnic Identities as Constructions of Archaeology: The Case of the *Alamanni*

SEBASTIAN BRATHER

Introduction

There is a long and stable tradition in prehistoric research which identifies archaeological material with 'tribes' mentioned in ancient sources.¹ Since the sixteenth century, the question has been asked all over Europe: which ancient peoples stood at the beginning of history? The Romantic era brought the beginnings of a patriotic antiquarianism (*vaterländische Altertumskunde*). In Germany, the most important question was, is the archaeological material Celtic, Germanic, or Slavic? But only in the Age of Imperialism did prehistoric archaeology achieve political relevance. Archaeological finds could be an excellent argument for extensions of territory — until today.²

Four terms were and continue to be essential for this argument: people, culture, language, and race. Around 1800, the concept of the 'people' (*Volk*) was discovered.

¹ This study arises from project C4 'Ethnische Einheiten im frühgeschichtlichen Europa: Archäologische Forschung und ihre politische Instrumentalisierung', part of the *Sonderforschungsbereich 541*, 'Identitäten und Alteritäten: Die Funktion von Alterität für die Konstitution und Konstruktion von Identität', at the University of Freiburg im Breisgau.

Many thanks go to Sarah McClure (University of California, Santa Barbara) and Andrew Gillett for improving my English.

² Cf. Bruce G. Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought* (Cambridge, 1989); Veit, 'Ethnic Concepts in German Prehistory'; *Nationalism, Politics, and the Practice of Archaeology*, ed. by Philip L. Kohl and Clare Fawcett (Cambridge, 1995); *Nationalism and Archaeology in Europe*, ed. by Margarita Díaz-Andreu and Timothy Champion (London, 1996).

Soon the ideas of *Volksgeist* became the central concept and category of the historical disciplines. Culture, defined by Gustaf Friedrich Klemm (1802–67) and Edward Byrnett Tylor (1832–1917) in the mid-nineteenth century, could be interpreted in two ways: historically in an evolutionary framework, or as different regional cultures. The latter, established by Gustaf Kossinna (1858–1931) and Vere Gordon Childe (1892–1957), is still the dominant notion today.³ Folklore (*Volkskunde*) and archaeology understood their categories not as (scientific) constructions, but as realities. Like the concepts of ‘language’ in linguistics and of ‘race’ in physical anthropology, all these terms were imagined as congruent, homogeneous unities with sharp, distinct boundaries, removed from historical change. New concepts of (ethnic) identity now emphasize the self-definition and fluctuation of such groups, and the interaction between inclusion (‘identity’) and exclusion (‘alterity’). That is why ethnic groups have a *belief* in common culture and in common descent (what Max Weber called *Gemeinsamkeitsglauben*).⁴

Archaeology needs to realize that the question is not how, but whether, ‘archaeological cultures’ and ‘ethnic groups’ can be identified with each other.⁵ There is no doubt that the terms Celts, Germans, Scythians, and so on, used by ancient ethnographers, described pre-eminently *geographical* unities, not *ethnic* realities. Moreover, there are different levels behind ‘ethnic’ terms: the perspective of ancient and medieval observers, the internal view of the ethnic groups themselves, reconstructed language groups, regional ‘cultures’ as archaeological constructions, and so on. Thus we have the same name for different things, and there is no way to equate for example the Goths on the Black Sea in the third and fourth century with the Goths in Italy in the sixth century. In my opinion, archaeology must concentrate on questions adequate to its sources — these are questions of social structure, economic history, and history of culture. We need alternative explanations, a new paradigm, for things traditionally interpreted as ‘ethnic’ groups, because this can be only one (and not the only) possible explanation. This paper aims to present a short analysis of the ‘ethnic paradigm’ in archaeology and a view of its systematic limitations.

³ Veit, ‘Gustaf Kossinna und V. Gordon Childe’; cf. Hildegard Schwerin v. Krosigk, *Gustaf Kossinna: Der Nachlaß — Versuch einer Analyse*, Offa-Ergänzungsreihe, 6 (Neumünster, 1982); Sebastian Brather, ‘Kossinna, Gustaf’, in *RGA* XVII (2001), pp. 263–67; Barbara MacNairn, *The Method and Theory of V. Gordon Childe: Economic, Social and Cultural Interpretations of Prehistory* (Edinburgh, 1980); *The Archaeology of V. Gordon Childe: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. by David R. Harris (London, 1994).

⁴ For a broader description and analysis of the history of the ‘ethnic paradigm’ and modern concepts of identity, cf. Sebastian Brather, ‘Ethnische Identitäten als Konstrukte der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie’, *Germania*, 78 (2000), 139–77.

⁵ Jones, *Archaeology of Ethnicity*. Cf. the inadequate study of Marlies Wendowski, *Archäologische Kultur und ethnische Einheit: Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Identifikation*, Arbeiten zur Urgeschichte des Menschen, 19 (Frankfurt am Main, 1995).

'Ethnic Interpretation': The Case of the Alamanni

If one looks in a systematic way at 'ethnic interpretation' in archaeology (the 'ethnic paradigm'), there is a great variety, not a single 'method'.⁶ Very different things are interpreted as ethnic categories — linguistic groups, tribes and tribal families, and even individuals. Different levels — language, *ethnos*, and culture — and different aspects are put together. These different relations need specific scientific methods and procedures. Identification of language groups requires analysis of wider cultural areas; differences between various *gentes* and their 'members' could be found even in some selected cultural traits. It is evident that the term 'ethnic paradigm' does not always hit the nail on the head.

To put these approaches in archaeology into a (suggested) 'system', we have to distinguish five aspects: (1) the connections between an 'archaeological culture' and a people; (2) the connections between cultural and ethnic continuity; (3) processes of ethnogenesis; (4) the demonstration of migrations; and (5) the identification of foreigners and minorities (fig. 1). These five aspects represent an (imagined) order of time. The starting point is the identification of 'culture' and '*ethnos*'. Going backwards in time, archaeologists look at cultural and ethnic continuities down to the genesis of 'culture' and '*ethnos*'. Moving forwards in time, cultural radiation from the postulated origin means expansion and migration. At this point, we detect 'foreign' individuals in a different cultural milieu, or describe ethnically heterogeneous societies, such as *Romani* and *Germani* in late antique and early medieval Gaul. This scheme is a summary of common approaches, setting out the 'ethnic paradigm' and its connotations in archaeology; it does not show my own opinion.

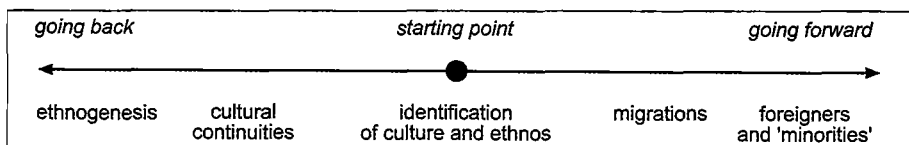


Fig. 1. Schematic representation of conceptions of 'ethnic interpretation' in archaeology. Starting with the equation of an 'archaeological culture' with an *ethnos*, one can go back in time along cultural continuities or traditions to the ethnogenesis of the group in question. Looking forward, cultural relations can be seen as migrations, ending with the description of 'foreigners' or heterogeneous populations. This suggestive, imaginative scheme is obviously far from historical reality. It deals with cultures as billiard balls.

⁶ Overviews such as Reinhard Bernbeck, *Theorien in der Archäologie* (Tübingen, 1997), disregard these 'theories' in archaeology: the 'ethnic variant' of historic interpretation in archaeology accords with 'common sense'.

I want to demonstrate these archaeological constructs in the case of the *Alamanni*. It would be useful to exemplify underlying methodological assumptions, because they are not explicitly named in most archaeological studies. The *Alamanni* are first mentioned in AD 289. They appear as plunderers who crossed the *limes*, and later as soldiers and settlers. The Frankish king Clovis defeated several Alemannian kings, and he incorporated 'Alemannian' areas (in the upper Rhine and the upper Danube) into the Merovingian kingdom. In the early Middle Ages, *Alamannia* was the name of a part of the Merovingian and Carolingian kingdom and the name of a duchy.⁷

The Starting Point: Regional Differentiation and Settlement Areas

Archaeologists need a starting point in order to search for ethnic unities in their material. The first step should be the connection between the identification of 'culture' and 'ethnos', at one exact time in one specific area. Only then is it possible to follow continuities and migrations. This model is based on culturally (and socially) homogeneous and distinctive areas. So the first question in our example would be, where did the (first) *Alamanni* live? The oldest archaeological finds from modern south-western Germany which can be associated with Germanic settlers come from the fourth century AD. Material of the third century is very rare, although the Romans developed the term *Alamanni* around AD 300 to describe these plundering warrior groups. What archaeology can describe is the genesis of stable settlement structures during the fourth century and their subsequent history.⁸

All attempts to identify the settlement area of the *Alamanni* deal with material from the fifth century onwards. The main reason is the nature of archaeological sources. Settlement archaeology primarily shows economic structures and does not tell us much about cultural differentiation in detail. It is not until the start of the *Reihengräbersitte* in the fifth century that archaeology can rely on subtly differentiated material.⁹ In order

⁷ Overview: Dieter Geuenich, *Geschichte der Alemannen* (Stuttgart, 1997), a subtle and modern view of the sources, which comes to new and satisfying results. *Die Alamannen*, ed. by Karlheinz Fuchs and others, Archäologisches Landesmuseum Baden-Württemberg (Stuttgart, 1997), the catalogue for an exhibition mounted in Stuttgart, Zürich, and Augsburg, shows the newest archaeological and historical interpretations; it contains different views on the topic, which in some cases are contradictory.

⁸ Cf. Gerhard Fingerlin, 'Siedlungen und Siedlungstypen: Südwestdeutschland in frühalamannischer Zeit', in *Die Alamannen*, pp. 125–34; Christel Bückler and Michael Hoeper, 'First Aspects of Social Hierarchy of Settlements in Merovingian Southwest Germany', in *Settlement and Landscape* [Conference Århus 1998], ed. by Charlotte Fabeck and Jytte Ringtved (Højbjerg, 1999), pp. 441–54.

⁹ Cf. Dieter Quast, 'Vom Einzelgrab zum Friedhof: Beginn der Reihengräbersitte im 5. Jahrhundert', in *Die Alamannen*, pp. 171–90; Guy Halsall, 'The Origins of the *Reihengräberzivilisation*: Forty Years On', in *Fifth-Century Gaul*, pp. 196–207; idem, *Early Medieval*

to identify *Alamanni*, *Franci*, and other *Germani* in their graves, Frank Siegmund analysed several cemeteries from the fifth to the seventh centuries in central Europe. In his view (which I share), it is not possible to detect ethnic differences on the basis of clothes.¹⁰ Instead, Siegmund analysed armaments and vessels in the graves, looking at whole cemeteries and not at single graves (fig. 2).

The results are not surprising. Differences between 'peoples' or *gentes* are a matter of quantity, not a matter of presence or absence: *Franci* had more spear heads and axes, *Alamanni* more spathas and saxes (fig. 3).¹¹ This picture shows similarities over wide areas of settlement, communication, and administration. No written source tells us that these gradual differences had any influence on or meaning for Alemannian or Frankish identities. How should we deal with the overlapping area between the two culturally defined regions?¹² Siegmund's findings doubtlessly describe cultural realities, but his sharp distinction between cultures is no more than a scientific classification. His categorization, however, suggests sharp boundaries. For this reason, I doubt whether archaeology is able to distinguish in detail the area of Alemannian settlement.¹³ Classification as 'Alemannian' or 'Frankish' is derived from written sources, not from archaeological research.

Cemeteries: An Introduction to Burial Archaeology in the Post-Roman West, New Light on the Dark Ages, 1 (Skelmorlie, 1995).

¹⁰ Frank Siegmund, 'Alemannen und Franken: Archäologische Überlegungen zu ethnischen Strukturen in der zweiten Hälfte des 5. Jahrhunderts', in *Franken und Alemannen*, pp. 558–80 (p. 561). Nevertheless, the notion that costume is the only way to express ethnic identity dominates early medieval archaeology; cf. Alexander Koch, *Bügelfibeln der Merowingerzeit im westlichen Frankenreich*, 2 vols, Monographien des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums in Mainz, 41 (Bonn, 1998), II, 535. Costume does present identities, but primarily its importance is to express status and to make distinctions *within* a society, not between societies. So the relevance of costume is a social one.

¹¹ Frank Siegmund, 'Kleidung und Bewaffnung der Männer im östlichen Frankenreich', in *Die Franken: Wegbereiter Europas*, pp. 691–706 (pp. 705–06, fig. 577).

¹² The map (fig. 2) shows a large transitional zone between the Danube and the Main. The 'very Alemannian' cemeteries lie in the East, near the Bavarian regions (even the cemetery of Altenerding, which Volker Bierbrauer, 'Das Reihengräberfeld von Altenerding in Oberbayern und die bajuwarische Ethnogenese — eine Problemskizze: Anmerkungen anlässlich der Veröffentlichung des Bandes I der Altenerding-Publikation von W. Sage', *Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters*, 13 (1985), 7–25, interprets as a mirror of Bavarian ethnogenesis, seems to be Alemannian). And the picture would change, if more cemeteries of north-western France (*Neustrie*) are incorporated. Then the contrast would shift from north-west–south-east to west–east.

¹³ But cf. the attempt to do so by Lutz Grunwald, 'Fränkisch oder alamannisch? Das Neuwieder Becken während des 5. Jahrhunderts n. Chr.', *Acta Praehistorica et Archaeologica*, 30 (1998), 38–54; Robert Koch and Ursula Koch, 'Die fränkische Expansion ins Main- und Neckargebiet', in *Die Franken: Wegbereiter Europas*, I, 270–84.

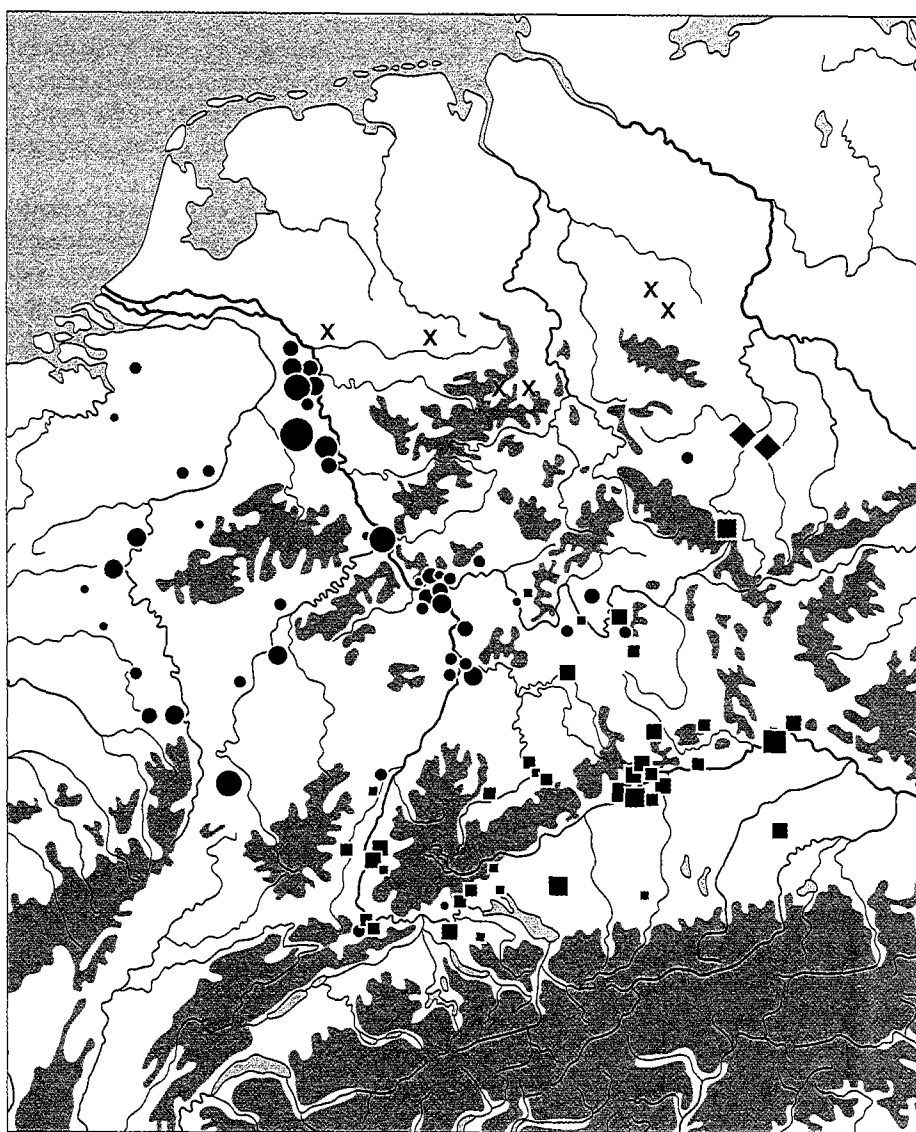


Fig. 2. Different 'models of culture' (*Kulturmodelle*) in the sixth century. These models are based on analyses of how often and which armaments and vessels are put into the graves of one cemetery. ■ 'Alamanni'; ● 'Franci'; ♦ 'Thuringians'; X 'not yet classified' ('Saxons'?). The bigger each sign, the more a cemetery resembles the specific 'model of culture'. The map shows diffuse regional differences in culture which go back to Late Antiquity, not identities (adapted from Frank Siegmund, 'Als Franke sterben: Ethnizität und Siedlungsraum der südlichen Nachbarn der Sachsen nach archäologischen Quellen', *Studien zur Sachsenforschung*, 12 (1999), 209–22 (p. 213, fig. 4)).

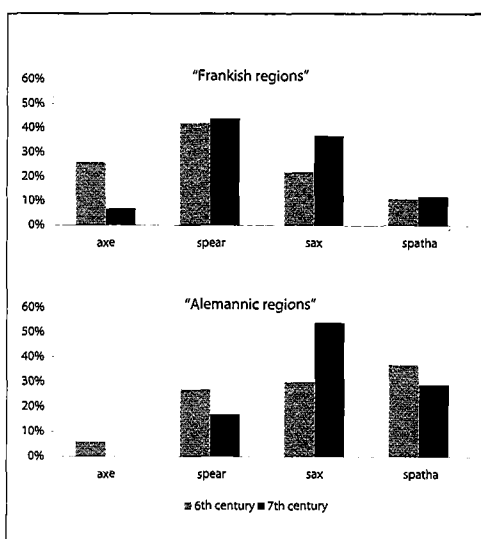


Fig. 3. Frequency of certain kinds of weapons, buried in male graves of southern and western Germany during the Merovingian period (sixth to seventh centuries). It is the identical changes in time which seem to be more interesting than the regional nuances (varied after Siegmund, 'Kleidung und Bewaffnung', p. 705, fig. 577)

Similar development in the Rhineland and south-western Germany — the disappearance of axes and the preference for saxes — demonstrates ubiquitous changes in military equipment and processes of social reconciliation during the sixth and seventh centuries. Approaches to the evidence along these lines, over wide areas, seems to me much more interesting than examination of 'original' differences. This view, which Siegmund shares for later Merovingian times only, is supported by the so-called *Goldgriffspathen*-horizon.¹⁴ Beginning around 500, a social elite throughout western and central Europe, whether *Alamanni* or *Franci*, were interred with these special swords.¹⁵

We can see fundamental regional changes in the placement of vessels in graves, over and above certain changes through time.¹⁶ Between the river Maas, the middle and lower Rhine, and the river Main, thrown

ceramics are found commonly, handmade pottery only rarely, and glass in relatively large quantities. Between the upper Rhine and the area around the upper Danube, the necropolises have only limited amounts of thrown pottery or glass vessels; there, the

¹⁴ *Goldgriffspatha* are splendid swords with a grip covered by a thin gold sheet, dating from the mid-fifth to early sixth centuries; some twenty specimens are known, one from Childeric's grave in Tournai. Cf. Horst Wolfgang Böhme, 'Der Frankenkönig Childerich zwischen Attila und Aëtius: Zu den Goldgriffspathen der Merowingerzeit', in *Festschrift für Otto-Herman Frey*, ed. by Claus Dobiati, Marburger Studien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte, 16 (Marburg, 1994), pp. 69–110; Wilfried Menghin, 'Schwerter des Goldgriffspathenhorizonts im Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Berlin', *Acta Praehistorica et Archaeologica*, 26/27 (1994/95), 140–92.

¹⁵ Despite some archaeological attempts to differentiate between a 'Frankish' and an 'Alemannian' variant of the *Goldgriffspatha*; Hermann Ament, 'Goldgriffspatha', in *RGA* XII (1998), pp. 333–35.

¹⁶ Changes over time: Frank Siegmund, 'Social Structure and Relations', in *Franks and Alamanni in the Merovingian Period: An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. by Ian Wood, *StHistArch*, 3 (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 177–99 (pp. 185–86, fig. 6/8–13).

proportion of handmade pottery is higher. What is the reason for these apparent differences between 'Frankish' and 'Alemannian' areas? Siegmund is right to look at late antique traditions. In northern Gaul, wheel-made pottery and glass go back to late Roman practices, and in *Alamannia* there are more Germanic traditions from outside the former Roman provinces.¹⁷ What we can observe are cultural nuances. They go back to traditions of the fourth and fifth centuries, when *Franci* and *Alamanni* did not exist as large formations. It was the cultural, political, and historical environment that made the differences: on the one hand, Roman Gaul; on the other, the barbarian lands adjacent the *limes*, with their mixed Germanic groups. These different cultural traditions determined the *habitus* and the mind of the contemporaries, but not, so far as we know, their ethnic identities. In my opinion, Siegmund has not developed an 'autonomous archaeological model of *ethnoi*' after all.¹⁸

Cultural Continuity and Ethnic Continuity

If certain *ethnoi* were to be identified with an archaeological culture, then the next step would be the question of origins. What does continuity of cultures mean? For a long time, these continuities were understood as ethnic continuity, offering the possibility of extending the history of a people into earlier periods of time. In most cases, archaeology looked (and continues to look) for the origin of large, linguistically defined groups, such as Celts, ancient Germans, or Slavs. Smaller groups, such as the Goths or some north-western Slavic *gentes*, are not so easy to identify, as they share many cultural traits with their neighbours.¹⁹ For this reason, only selected cultural characteristics, not an entire 'archaeological culture', are used to trace back to any origin. But strictly speaking, the linguistically defined groups were not ethnic groups. Today, archaeology is relatively cautious; in most cases, attempts to trace origins go back only by one culture: for the Celts, back to the Late Hallstatt culture in the early

¹⁷ Siegmund, 'Alemannen und Franken', p. 569.

¹⁸ Siegmund, 'Alemannen und Franken', p. 574 ('eigenständiges archäologisches Ethnos-konzept'). Cf. now idem, *Alemannen und Franken*, RGA Ergänzungsbände, 23 (Berlin, 2000). I use *habitus* in the sense of Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, 1977) as appearance and behaviour, or 'systems of durable, transposable dispositions' (p. 72).

¹⁹ Cf. Volker Bierbrauer, 'Archäologie und Geschichte der Goten vom 1.–7. Jahrhundert: Versuch einer Bilanz', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 28 (1994), 51–171; his most characteristic (and nearly exclusive) feature of 'the Goths' is inhumation without weapons; his account of 'Gothic national costume' ('national-gotische Tracht', p. 166) is likewise unconvincing. With regard to the Slavs and methodological problems of 'ethnic interpretation', cf. Sebastian Brather, "'Germanische", "slawische" und "deutsche" Sachkultur des Mittelalters: Probleme ethnischer Interpretation', *Ethnographisch-archäologische Zeitschrift*, 37 (1996), 177–216; idem, 'Einwanderergruppen oder Regionalentwicklung? Die frühen Slawen zwischen Elbe und Oder', *Das Altertum*, 45 (1999), 331–46.

iron age; for the Germanic peoples, back to the late Iron Age Jastorf culture.²⁰ This practice seems at first to be careful. But seen methodologically, there is no difference between this cultural 'break' (symbolized by a new archaeological culture) and ones earlier in time (Bronze Age or Stone Age). At least it would be an exception if linguistic and cultural development were parallel and synchronous.

How does archaeology describe the cultural traditions of the *Alamanni*? Usually, it is relations with the supposed 'homeland' between Thuringia and Bohemia that are considered (see below). Traditions which go back to the Roman provincial population (in *Germania superior*, Raetia) and their cultural background are seldom regarded. Siegmund observes more barbarous or Germanic traditions in *Alamannia* of the sixth century than in *Francia* (between the Loire and the Rhine).²¹ This difference extends back to Late Antiquity; the variable 'balance of power' between the provincial population and settling barbarians, and social and economic circumstances, strengthened 'antique' or 'Germanic' cultural traditions. This process was not a matter of identity but of *habitus*. A 'mixed' civilization developed, so that the search for antique or barbarian 'roots' of cultural traits is not useful.²² Reciprocal 'acculturation' was promoted by the Roman army.²³

In seeking to distinguish identities, we have to answer the question *which* cultural traditions and continuities could be and actually were relevant for the ethnic identity of a barbarian group. Early medieval archaeology mainly considers brooches and weapons. Evidence relating to settlement, economy, and social hierarchy is seen as irrelevant with respect to ethnic identity. Therefore only a small part of material culture is taken into account. Nevertheless, these spheres of culture represent the main continuities over longer periods. Short-term variations can be observed in fibulae, but are these variations related to changes of identity (fig. 4)? The practice of relating stylistic changes to ethnic identity, while overtly emphasizing quick trends in fashion among the material finds, in fact implies 'deep', unchanging, and unchangeable identities of those who bore each style. Why examine only female jewellery — why not male adornments? What we can see in the graves is primarily social rank and distinction *within* societies — not conscious distinction from adjoining societies.²⁴

²⁰ Cf. Hermann Ament, 'Der Rhein und die Ethnogenese der Germanen', *Prähistorische Zeitschrift*, 59 (1984), 37–47; *The Celts*, ed. by Sabatino Moscati and others, Palazzo Grassi (Milano, 1991).

²¹ Siegmund, 'Alemannen und Franken', pp. 569–70.

²² 'Mixed population': cf. Horst Wolfgang Böhme, *Germanische Grabfunde des 4. und 5. Jahrhunderts zwischen unterer Elbe und Loire: Studien zur Chronologie und Bevölkerungsgeschichte*, Münchner Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte, 19 (Munich, 1974).

²³ Max Martin, 'Zwischen den Fronten: Alamannen im römischen Heer', in *Die Alamannen*, pp. 119–24.

²⁴ Social distinctions: cf. Heiko Steuer, *Frühgeschichtliche Sozialstrukturen in Mitteleuropa: Eine Analyse der Auswertungsmethoden des archäologischen Quellenmaterials*, Abhandlungen

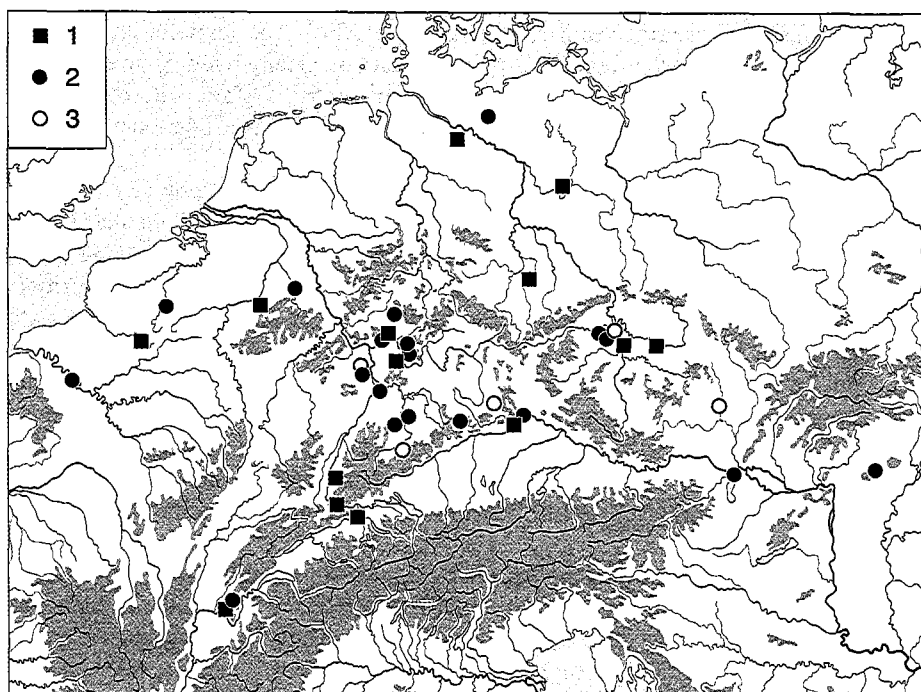


Fig. 4. 'Alemannian' *Bögelfibeln* (1 type Groß Umstadt; 2 type Nieder-Florstadt/Wiesloch; 3 brooches with similar headplate to type Florstadt/Wiesloch). More than half these brooches appear outside early-sixth-century *Alamannia* (after Koch, *Bögelfibeln der Merowingerzeit*, map 1).

Ethnogenesis

In tracing cultural continuities backwards in time, sooner or later there will be a cultural 'break', the beginning of an 'archaeological culture'. According to the logic of the ethnic paradigm, it is this moment which should be called 'ethnogenesis'.²⁵ But we always find cultural continuities, even beyond distinctive periods — because

der Akademie der Wissenschaften Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse, 3rd series, 128 (Göttingen, 1982).

²⁵ *Ethnogenese europäischer Völker: Aus der Sicht der Anthropologie und Vor- und Frühgeschichte* [Ilse Schwidetzky zum 75. Geburtstag], ed. by Wolfram Bernhard and Anneliese Kandler-Pálsson (Stuttgart, 1986), does not look at ethnogenesis, despite the title, but at the origins of linguistic groups — on the basis of material of archaeology and physical anthropology; cf. for the same problematic concept *Archaeology and Language*, ed. by Roger Blench and Matthew Spriggs, 4 vols, *One World Archaeology*, 27, 29, 34, 35 (London, 1997–99).

archaeological periodization is nothing but the division of a continuum into sections. This is the reason why scholars date the origins of Celts or ancient Germans in different ways: to the late or the early Iron Age, to the Bronze Age, or even to the Neolithic. Besides certain modern political intentions, these different views show the uncertainty of the methodological basis. When should we emphasize continuity, and when discontinuity? A decision would only be possible if cultural and ethnic developments could be set parallel.

How did plundering warrior groups between the upper Rhine and the upper Danube become the *Alamanni*? Cultural traditions show wide-ranging relationships throughout *Germania magna* (fig. 5). There seems, however, to be a cultural break in south-western Germany which the archaeological evidence does not bridge. The decisive argument rests not on the absence of clear cultural traditions, but on the evidence of written sources which reflect the 'creation' of the *Alamanni* by Rome around AD 300. The *Alamanni* did not come from elsewhere in the north; they arose in former Roman territories.²⁶

The development of new cultural traits in Late Antiquity does not clearly differentiate the *Alamanni* from other Germanic 'groups' such as the Franks, Thuringians, and Saxons. There are some artefact types (brooches, 'Longobard belts', 'Longobard foil crosses', weapons, pottery) which are mainly distributed in modern south-western Germany (fig. 4). But the same or related types are found also in northern Italy (belts, foil crosses²⁷), in Gaul, or in the Rhineland (brooches, weapons).²⁸ Little by little, the region between the upper Rhine and the upper Danube became a distinct cultural zone. This, however, should not be misunderstood as evidence for a common Alemannian identity; we know of several Alemannian kings earlier, in the fifth century. The main reasons for the formation of this diffuse, heterogeneous cultural area were communication, traffic, and (after the incorporation of the region into the Merovingian kingdom) politically drawn boundaries, not an ethnic identity.²⁹

²⁶ Cf. Hans Ulrich Nuber, 'Zur Entstehung des Stammes der *Alamanni* aus römischer Sicht', in *Franken und Alemannen*, pp. 367–83. Older studies saw *Semnon*es and *Suebi* as large groups coming from the Elbe region via the Main area.

²⁷ Cf. Hubert Fehr, 'Zur Deutung der Prunkgürtelsitte der jüngeren Merowingerzeit: Das Verhältnis von Waffenbeigabe und Gürtelbeigabe anhand der Männergräber von Schretzheim und Kirchheim/Ries', in *Archäologie als Sozialgeschichte: Studien zu Siedlung, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im frühgeschichtlichen Mitteleuropa* [Festschrift Heiko Steuer], ed. by Sebastian Brather, Christel Bucker, and Michael Hoepfer, *Studia honoraria*, 9 (Rahden, 1999), pp. 105–11; Ellen Riemer, 'Zu Vorkommen und Herkunft italischer Folienkreuze', *Germania*, 77 (1999), 609–36.

²⁸ Cf. Koch, *Bügelfibeln der Merowingerzeit*; Siegmund, 'Kleidung und Bewaffnung'; idem, 'Alemannen und Franken'.

²⁹ According to Geuenich, *Geschichte der Alemannen*, p. 91, there was no ethnic homogeneity and political unity of the *Alamanni* prior to c. AD 500, the date of Merovingian dominance.

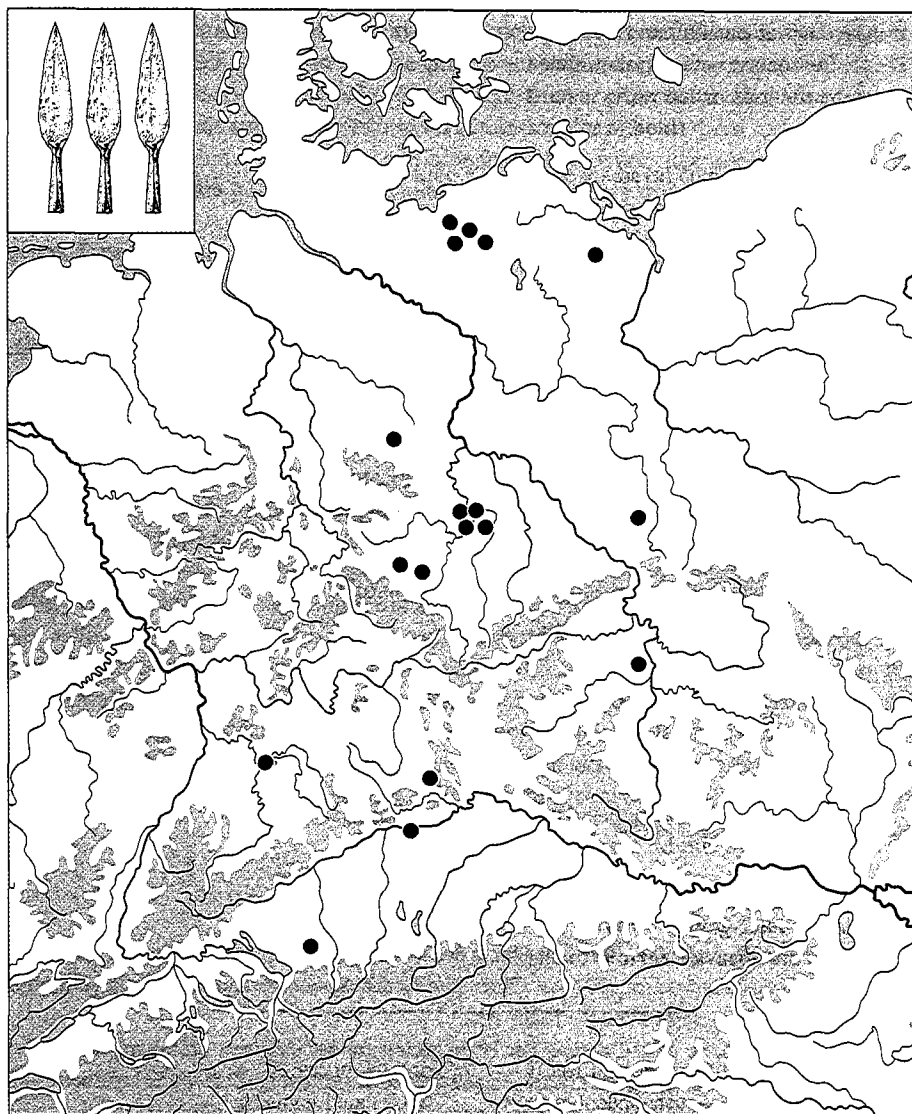


Fig. 5. Some Germanic elite graves containing two or three arrow heads (silver or bronze). Such graves of the late third and fourth centuries are to be found along the Elbe (Thuringia, Mecklenburg, Bohemia) and in southern Germany. The main relations went to the south, not to the south-west (from Steuer, 'Theorien zur Herkunft', p. 292, fig. 2).

Alexander Koch wonders that in the sixth century the *Alamanni*, on the one hand, preserved their specific ethnic character in form of their costume (i.e. fibulae), but on the other, had already lost their identity at the level of law.³⁰ The mistake is to confuse ethnic and cultural notions.³¹ Brooches were not an expression of ethnic identity, which could be possessed only by Alemannian women; rather, brooches show the continued existence of older cultural traditions even under new political conditions. Between the third/fourth and the seventh centuries, we find no striking changes in material culture that could indicate one or more Alemannian ethnogeneses. The development of material culture follows rhythms other than political changes. What we see is the development of a similar material culture in the Merovingian kingdom(s) — with regional features (brooches, weapons, cemeteries, settlements).

Migrations and Expansions

Migration and diffusion are alternatives to explain the spread of cultural features.³² The starting point here is a culture viewed as a homogeneous entity, proceeding then to its 'expansion'. Cultural spread is often seen not so much as influence and 'acculturation', but as movements of people, as migration of smaller or larger groups. These concepts can refer to ancient and medieval ideas of migration: of a Scandinavian 'womb of nations', or of the permanent migrations of eastern nomads. One must distinguish between migrations of a whole population (Celts in Italy, western Slavs, Anglo-Saxons?) on the one hand, and on the other, the movements of smaller (warrior) groups or *Gefolgschaften*, often intending to plunder a region (Goths, Vandals, Slavs, Vikings). Under what circumstances must 'import goods' in one area, which have their massive occurrence in another region, be understood as relics of exchange, and when as evidence for the migration of people? Archaeological material itself cannot answer this question. We need additional information from other sources. For this reason, archaeology deals with migrations in proto-historic times only, and rarely (except for the 'Indo-Europeans') in prehistory.

The *Alamanni* did not migrate in large groups. But the people who became the *Alamanni* between the Rhine and the *limes* from the third century came from elsewhere. Written history gives no exact evidence of their origin. Many archaeological maps (of various fibulae, combs, and pottery) show relationships in a north-eastern direction

³⁰ Koch, *Bügelfibeln der Merowingerzeit*, p. 562. The author believes that no Frankish woman would bear 'Ostrogothic', 'Thuringian', or 'Longobard' fibulae, except when forced by special circumstances (ibid., 536–37).

³¹ Archaeologists often mistake 'cultural' for 'ethnic' names. 'Longobard foil crosses', 'Alemannian brooches', and 'Ostrogothic fibulae' are *termini technici* to describe some kinds of objects. Whether they had any importance for identities needs to be demonstrated.

³² Cf. Chapman and Hamerow (eds), *Migrations and Invasions*.

(fig. 6).³³ These relationships cover a wide area between the Baltic Sea and Bohemia, along the river Elbe (*Elbgermanen*). They do not immediately indicate migration but rather a culture area. Archaeology observes long-distance relationships of which the direction (north-to-south or south-to-north) is not really clear. The principal inaccuracy of archaeological dating makes it impossible to determine whether the finds in south-western Germany are younger than the relics from the Elbe region (and if so, by how much). The continuous exchange between these regions, during the fourth and fifth centuries, indicates persistent interactions, not only Germanic migrations to the Roman provinces. Probably the interactions mean movements of goods and people in *both* directions — into the south-west and back to the 'homelands'. The stream back to the Elbe region is shown by the spread of Roman military objects.³⁴ Because connections existed from the late third until the fifth/sixth centuries, archaeology does not show a unique migration, but continuous and stable routes from the late Iron Age. Heiko Steuer called them early historic 'communication lines'.³⁵

The raids of 'Alemannian' warrior groups have left hardly any archaeological traces. Evidence of destruction in the Roman provinces and of plundered wealth have been found.³⁶ But exactly where the groups concerned came from is hard to say. Archaeological maps show only a few traces of Germanic presence in the lands adjacent the *limes*.³⁷ The warriors probably came from further afield, from inner Germania. Durable settlement structures are not to be seen in south-western Germany at any time earlier than Late Antiquity. Furthermore, there was not a complementary regression of population density in the Elbe region until the fifth and sixth centuries.³⁸ We do not see stable settlements established in south-western Germany and the decrease of settlement in the Elbe region until more than a hundred years after the first mention of the *Alamanni*.

³³ Cf. Heiko Steuer, 'Theorien zur Herkunft und Entstehung der Alemannen: Archäologische Forschungsansätze', in *Franken und Alemannen*, pp. 270–324 (pp. 289–311); Helga Schach-Döriges, '“Zusammengespülte und vermengte Menschen”: Suebische Kriegerbünde werden seßhaft', in *Die Alamannen*, pp. 79–102.

³⁴ Cf. Steuer, 'Theorien zur Herkunft', p. 303, fig. 7.

³⁵ Steuer, 'Theorien zur Herkunft', p. 286, fig. 1 ('Verkehrsleitlinien').

³⁶ Cf. the booty of Neupotz; Ernst Künzl, *Die Alamannenbeute aus dem Rhein bei Neupotz: Plünderungsgut aus dem römischen Gallien*, 4 vols, Monographien des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums in Mainz, 34 (Bonn, 1993).

³⁷ Cf. Schach-Döriges, '“Zusammengespülte und vermengte Menschen”', p. 96, figs. 81–82.

³⁸ Cf. Achim Leube, 'Germanische Völkerwanderungen und ihr archäologischer Fundniederschlag: Das 5. und 6. Jh. östlich der Elbe. Ein Forschungsbericht (I)', *Ethnographisch-archäologische Zeitschrift*, 36 (1995), 3–84; idem, *Semnonen, Burgunden, Alamannen: Archäologische Beiträge zur germanischen Frühgeschichte des 1. bis 5. Jahrhunderts*, Öffentliche Vorlesungen, 17 (Berlin, 1995).

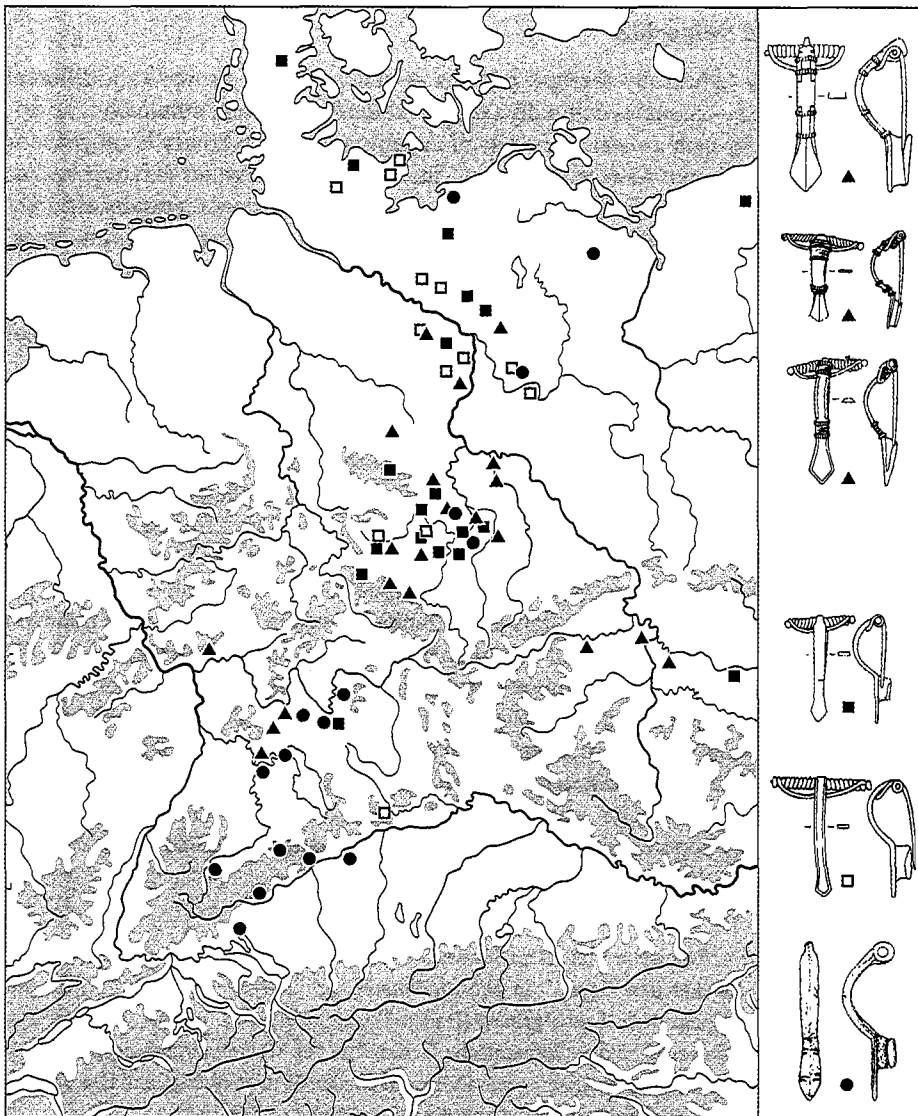


Fig. 6. Spread of the so-called 'Elbefibeln' (type Almgren VI, 174–76). These fibulae can be dated to the late third and fourth centuries. The map shows contacts between south-western Germany (between the Main and the Danube), Thuringia, and the lower Elbe region (from Steuer, 'Theorien zur Herkunft', p. 294, fig. 3).

Foreigners and 'Minorities'

To identify 'ethnically foreign' persons — individuals or groups in a different milieu of culture — assumes culturally (and *per definitionem* even 'ethnically') homogeneous areas. In such an area, elements of an adjoining and similarly homogeneous region should be found. As with migrations, the distribution of goods is interpreted as movement of men and women. Therefore, only movements *between* culturally different regions can be observed, not movements *within* such culturally uniform areas. Individuals could move, such as women through exogamy, merchants, captives, slaves, and resettled groups. Large groups of distinct tradition and origin also met together (Romans and ancient Germans in Late Antiquity, Slavs and Germans during the high Middle Ages). Exchange and 'acculturation' processes make the picture less clear.

Nearly every early medieval cemetery includes one or more graves with 'foreign' pieces of jewellery. We know of considerable mobility in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, so that a cultural 'mixture' would be no surprise. But how are 'foreign' grave goods to be explained in detail? Some kinds of handmade pots (*Kümpfe*) and pottery with plastic ornamentation (studs and dents, rippled and fluting decoration), 'Thuringian' bow-and-disc fibulae, spearheads, and bracteates are interpreted as the arrival of the Thuringian attendants (*Gefolgschaft*) of the new Frankish lords (fig. 7).³⁹ 'Alemannian' fibulae in northern Italy and 'Frankish' ones in *Alamannia* are believed to be the result of an expulsion of the Alemannian elite after their defeats by Clovis (fig. 8).⁴⁰ This interpretation rests upon female graves (brooches) and therefore does not describe the movement of armed warriors, at least not directly. Despite some hopes to the contrary, objects such as brooches, which are 'related' stylistically or otherwise, do not (necessarily) imply kinship (e.g. between *Alamannia* and *Thuringia*).⁴¹

Are there really 'foreign' individuals among the burials in 'Alemannian' cemeteries? Or do the 'imports' show only wide-ranging relationships (exchange)?⁴² The

³⁹ Ursula Koch, 'Ethnische Vielfalt im Südwesten: Beobachtungen in merowingerzeitlichen Gräberfeldern an Neckar und Donau', in *Die Alamannen*, pp. 219–32 (pp. 228–31), for the cemetery of Pleidelsheim near Ludwigsburg (Baden-Württemberg); cf. eadem, *Das Reihengräberfeld bei Schretzheim*, 2 vols, Germanische Denkmäler der Völkerwanderungszeit, A 13 (Berlin, 1977), I, 184–93, for Schretzheim near Dillingen (Baden-Württemberg), and Bierbrauer, 'Reihengräberfeld von Altenerding', for Altenerding near Munich (Bavaria).

⁴⁰ Ursula Koch, 'Besiegt, beraubt, vertrieben: Die Folgen der Niederlagen von 496/497 und 506', in *Die Alamannen*, pp. 191–201 (pp. 196–99).

⁴¹ Hopes: Schach-Dörge, "'Zusammengespülte und vermengte Menschen'", p. 81; Koch, 'Ethnische Vielfalt im Südwesten', pp. 228–30.

⁴² Cf. Manfred Menke, 'Alemannisch-italische Beziehungen vom späten fünften bis zum siebenten Jahrhundert aufgrund archäologischer Quellen', in *Die transalpinen Verbindungen der Bayern, Alamannen und Franken bis zum 10. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Helmut Beumann and Werner Schröder, *Nationes*, 6 (Sigmaringen, 1987), pp. 125–345.

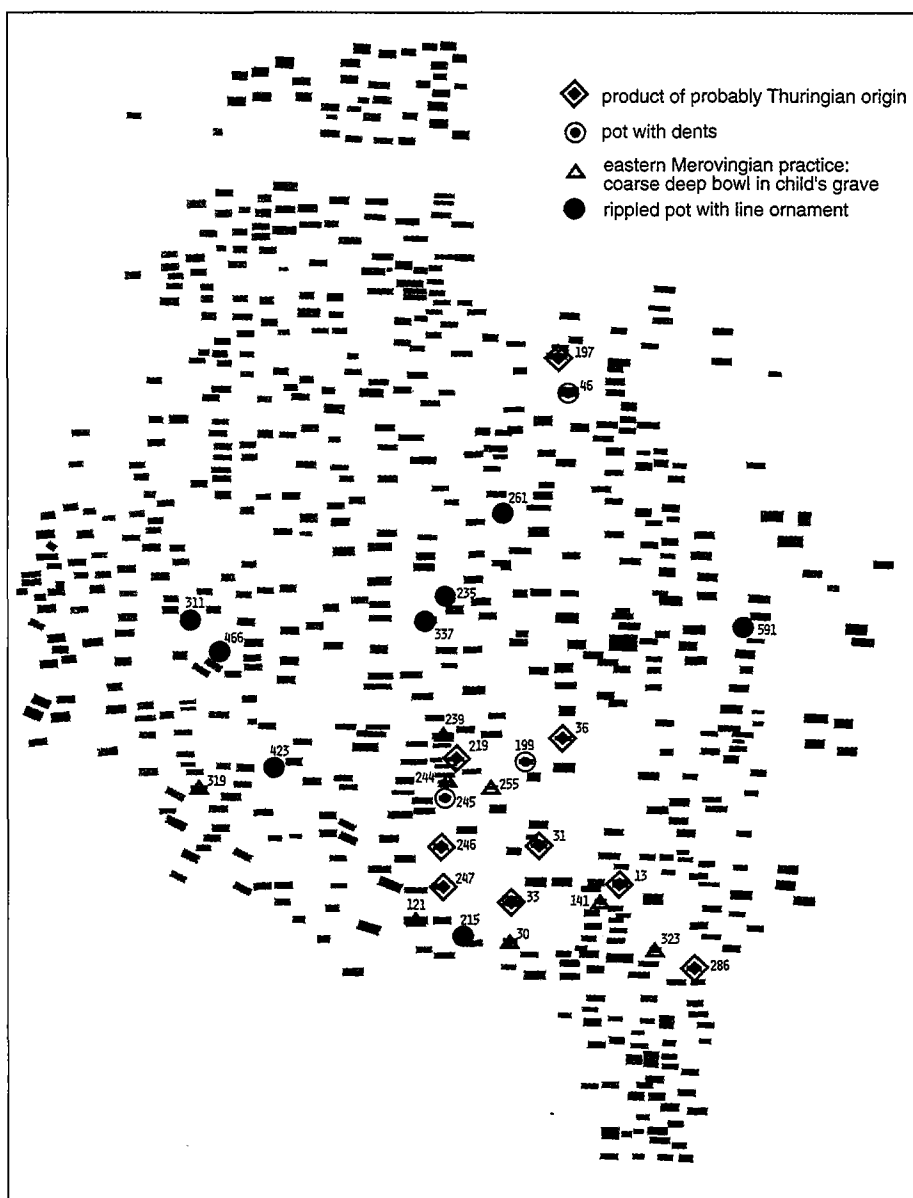


Fig. 7. Schretzheim near Dillingen (Baden-Württemberg), plan of the cemetery. The plan indicates graves with persons of supposed Thuringian, 'eastern Merovingian' origin. Did the buried individuals come from Thuringia, or do we see just relations? (from Koch, *Reihengräberfeld bei Schretzheim*, vol. II, pl. 268)

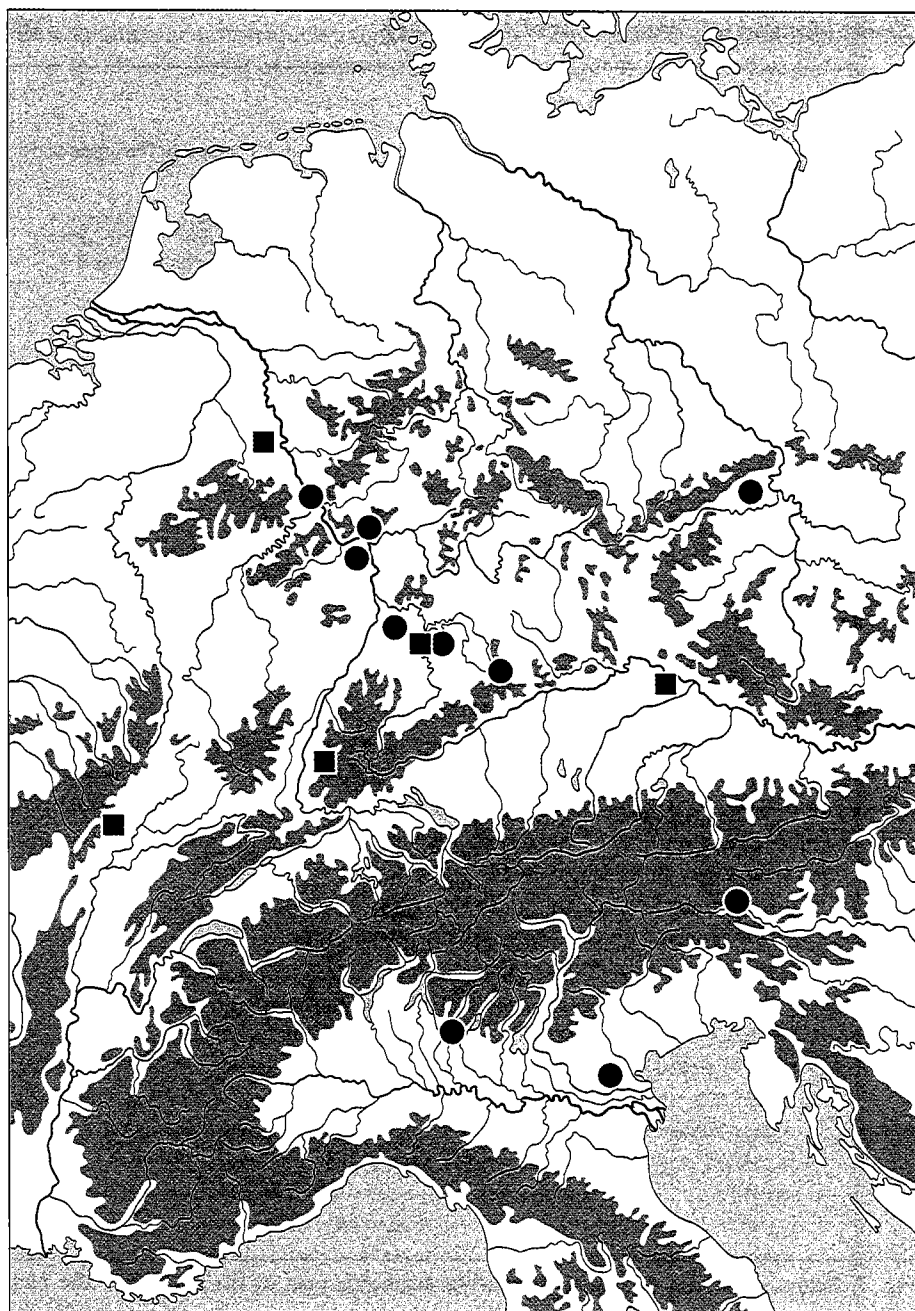


Fig. 8. A special type of 'Alemannian' *Bügelfibeln* (early sixth century). Do the brooches indicate members of the Alemannian elite who have fled or been banished into Burgundy, Noricum, and northern Italy; or do they only show contacts across the Alps? (after Koch, 'Besiegt, beraubt, vertrieben', p. 196, fig. 206)

methodological problem is to differentiate between these two possibilities. 'Thuringian' pieces exist not only in graves with a 'pure' Thuringian stock, but also mixed with pieces of other origins. Scandinavian fibulae and bracteates, 'Ostrogothic' fibulae, and 'Frankish' *oboli* have been found together.⁴³ These findings do not show the route Thuringians followed on their trip to *Alamannia*, nor do they reflect something like 'mixed' identities of some individuals. Assemblages of objects with different cultural traditions warn us against interpreting 'foreign' objects as evidence of where certain individuals come from. Above all, we can see cultural relationships — to Thuringia, the Rhineland, Burgundy, northern Italy, Raetia, Noricum, or Pannonia — at a structural level. 'Frankish' fibulae in *Alamannia* show not only new Frankish lords, but probably also parts of the 'loyal' Alemannian elite who adopted a Frankish *habitus*. Such a 'Franconization' offered opportunities for holding social status and rank. This view is supported for example by the mention of Alemannian commanders in Frankish armies, such as Leuthari and his brother Butilin (i.e. Buccelenus?), who are named *duces Francorum* in the mid-sixth century.⁴⁴

Methodic Variants of 'Ethnic Interpretation'

There is a wide range of 'ethnic interpretations' in archaeology, derived not from different theoretical models, but from flexible preferences for apparently convenient variants. Nevertheless, there are some basic elements which are used in most cases. First, homogeneous and distinctive groups are identified. Next, (1) large linguistic groups are associated with whole 'archaeological cultures'; (2) groups such as tribal families are equated with the combination of some cultural traits or traditions; and (3) small groups such as *ethnoi* in the true sense are distinguished by just one or two single characteristics in material culture.⁴⁵ In every case, each individual should have the same characteristics as all other members of the same group — social hierarchies and access to resources are completely neglected.⁴⁶

⁴³ Koch, 'Ethnische Vielfalt im Südwesten', p. 228, writes of a 'Thuringian' woman with 'Ostrogothic' bow fibulae and an *obolus* (minted in Ravenna, 540–52) according to 'Frankish' customs, who, c. 532 and at age fifteen, left Thuringia for Alemannia, and was buried in modern south-western Germany. But why is this woman seen as Thuringian? (cf. n. 60 below).

⁴⁴ Geuenich, *Geschichte der Alemannen*, pp. 93–94.

⁴⁵ Hans-Peter Wotzka, 'Maßstabsprobleme bei der ethnischen Deutung neolithischer "Kulturen"', *Das Altertum*, 43 (1997), 163–76, shows that all 'archaeological cultures' have a much larger area than all 'ethnic groups' we know from ethnology. This seems to be a rather 'practical' argument against the 'usual' equation.

⁴⁶ This is the main notion of modern nationalist concepts. Inner social inequality is superficially covered by ethnic homogeneity.

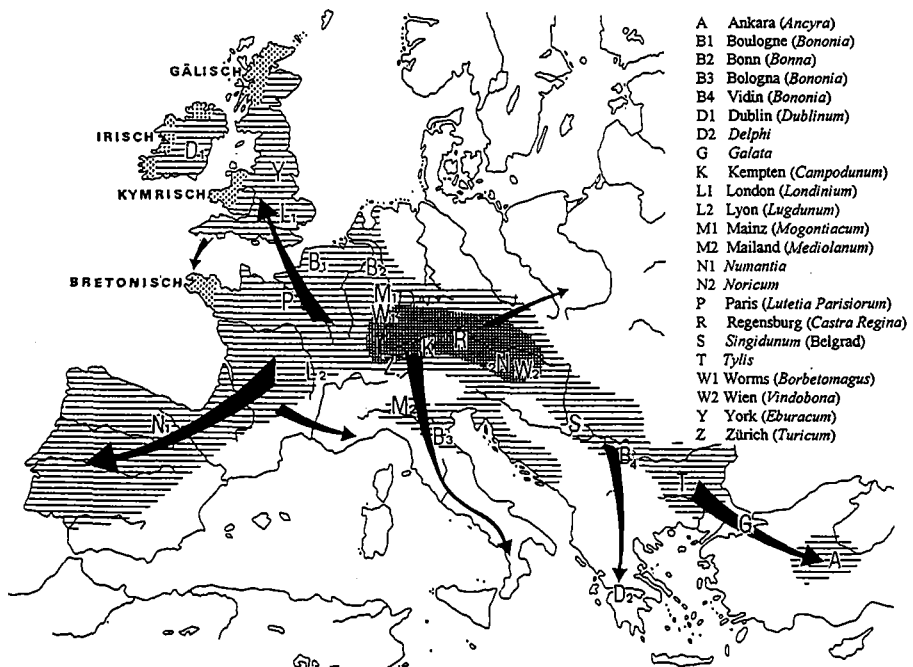


Fig. 9. Spread of the Celts. The map is based on written and archaeological sources. Gaul, according to antique written sources, is believed to be the 'homeland' of the Celts, whence they spread all over Europe. The 'origin' (dark shadowed) is connected with the area of the late Hallstatt and early Latène cultures north of the Alps (from Alexander Demandt, *Die Kelten* (Munich, 1998), p. 18, fig. 1).

Identification of whole 'archaeological cultures' is attempted only for large linguistic groups (Celts, ancient Germans, Slavs). In this model, only whole individual cultures can be identified with or distinguished from Celtic- or Germanic-speaking groups, for example the question whether the Latène culture or the Jastorf culture were connected with *all* Celtic or Germanic groups and vice versa (fig. 9). But these linguistic classifications are not historical realities; the same is true too for 'archaeological cultures'. Setting two scientific categories in parallel does not produce historic realities. The combination of specific cultural traits to establish familial, tribal groups is ambiguous. There is no rule by which elements are to be selected. In every case, cultural elements must be examined flexibly for the trait they 'fit' — because these traits are not clear at the outset. The 'flexible' and sometimes arbitrary selection of some cultural traits by archaeologists makes it impossible to achieve generally accepted results. Again the premise is homogeneity in the interior of the culture — though not in the same degree as for large cultural areas. At this point we come to a principal contradiction. How homogeneous is an 'archaeological culture' if one can differentiate some regional

specialities? And how sharp and reliable are the 'boundaries' with adjoining 'cultures' if we do not find inner homogeneity?

Should therefore single signs of ethnic identity be the solution? Single characteristics are able to distinguish small groups — *ethnoi* in the strict sense. But archaeologists expect to identify even warrior groups (*Gefolgschaften*) and individuals in foreign cultural milieux. This 'method' was developed after 1945, as a reaction to the methodological problems with ethnic interpretation of whole cultures.⁴⁷ It met with new ideas in ethnology and sociology, which emphasized the flexible selection of cultural signs to mark social and ethnic boundaries.⁴⁸ Ethnic identity as a belief in common culture and common descent selects one or more particular symbols to signal social boundaries. How can archaeology identify these symbolic signs? How does one move from a supposed symbol to its ideological background? The 'context made the difference'⁴⁹ — but we cannot begin with the symbol, then develop the context, and in the end identify the ethnic symbol; this would be a circular argument.

Antique and early medieval sources mention a number of 'material ethnic markers': armaments, costume and jewellery, and hair. Tacitus said the *Suebi* combed their hair sideways and tied it into a knot; the Celts wore torques around their necks; the Franks fought with the *francisca*, and the Saxons with the *sax*; and there are many other descriptions.⁵⁰ Most of these reports are not contemporary, but written much later (including the stories about the *francisca* and the *sax*). The Suebic hair knot was at first a social, not an ethnic sign, according to Tacitus (*Germania* XXXVIII 1–3). Similarly, the gold and silver brooches of Merovingian times, often with almandine stones, were primarily of social significance within the society; their regional differentiation was not so essential that it could be used for (regional or ethnic) demarcations. If material culture (i.e. its 'style') bears a symbolic meaning, and if archaeology is able to detect this meaning, its interpretation as a sign of ethnic relevance can be only one of several aspects — because people had several different identities.

Ethnic Identities in Archaeology?

The *Alamanni* are not easily described with archaeological sources. Certainly there are some special cultural traits in modern south-western Germany, but this regional

⁴⁷ The only exception is Gustaf Kossinna, 'Über verzierte Eisenlanzenspitzen als Kennzeichen der Ostgermanen', *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 37 (1905), 369–407. The dominating concept of culture gained popularity because of the works of Childe; cf. Veit, 'Gustaf Kossinna und V. Gordon Childe'.

⁴⁸ Cf. the ethnoarchaeological study of Ian Hodder, *Symbols in Action: Ethnoarchaeological Studies of Material Culture* (Cambridge, 1982).

⁴⁹ Pohl, 'Telling the Difference', p. 20.

⁵⁰ Cf. Pohl, 'Telling the Difference'.

differentiation is not specifically 'Alemannian'; it reflects cultural traditions and areas of interaction. Grave goods show, not the ethnic identity of individual persons, but social stratification. Cultural continuities and relations cover *both* the former Roman provinces and *Germania magna* (sc. the Elbe region). The continuous development of culture does not show 'breaks' which can be related to one or more Alemannian ethnogeneses. Plundering warrior groups and their raids are difficult to record; this can seldom be done, and only by their booty. No reference to an 'invasion' of 'the *Alamanni*' across the *limes* can be found in texts or documents. 'Foreign' jewellery in graves may have been part of the custom of 'foreign' women in some cases, but could just as well have been relics of exchange or plunder, or a gift. Neither a whole culture, an assemblage of cultural characteristics, nor any one single trait was specifically 'Alemannian'. Material culture as described by archaeology was not important for the ethnic identity of the *Alamanni*.

In the case of the *Alamanni*, we see primarily evidence of participation in a late antique and early medieval culture which characterizes wide areas of western Europe. *Alamannia* shared fundamental developments with adjoining regions; differences were due to changing influences and specific (cultural, historic, and social) conditions. The cultural continuum makes it impossible to detect the Alemannian settlement areas in detail. 'Origins' can be found in late antique *and* ancient Germanic cultures, so that 'traditions' are not very helpful in explaining the new, early medieval characteristics. 'Foreign' or 'import' goods show both wide-ranging relationships among the elites *and* individual mobility — but there is no possibility of deciding between these two models in any specific case. It is where the evidence is potentially the most interesting — was the warrior in a specific grave an *Alamannus* or a *Francus*? was a woman Thuringian or Alemannian? was a whole necropolis founded by Longobards or Ostrogoths? — that the 'ethnic paradigm' fails; a firm decision cannot be made either for identifying individuals or for demarking distinct boundaries.

The 'archaeology of ethnicity' has many unsolved methodological problems, and lacks critical reflection.⁵¹ That is why there are endless discussions about the 'ethnic character' of material culture. Archaeology describes and analyses 'material culture' of past societies. The result is not only an inventory of objects and their history (jewellery, weapons, tools), nor mainly a history of technology. Archaeology investigates everyday life within pre- and protohistoric societies: environment, economy (agriculture, craft, trade and exchange), settlement, funeral, and social differences. Comparison of different regions and chronological phases shows historical changes and developments. This archaeological knowledge of culture, economy, and society is in a sense the foundation of political history.

'Archaeological cultures' are *not* realities. They are classifications (as are 'peoples', 'language', and 'race'), the purpose of which is to bring order into archaeological

⁵¹ Cf. Jones, *Archaeology of Ethnicity*; Brather, 'Ethische Identitäten'.

material.⁵² The scheme goes back to V. Gordon Childe.⁵³ Childe adopted Gustaf Kossinna's atomistic concept and wanted to give it an inner structure and complexity.⁵⁴ The new criteria were the combination of elements from different social spheres. Childe saw problems in identifying 'archaeological cultures' with peoples and races, but this has become the dominant notion up to now. Archaeologists could not liberate themselves from national(istic) thought. In most cases, 'groups' associated with 'archaeological cultures' (Celts, ancient Germans, Slavs, Goths, Franks, or *Alamanni*) are not 'ethnic groups' in the correct sense of the term; they are much too large to have an ethnic identity. The methodological 'progress' of Childe's model is, at the same time, its mistake. Homogeneity of culture is a fiction. Different spheres are set in various relations and follow diverse rhythms of development and change. This network of divergent relations is exemplified by the 'polythetic' model of David L. Clarke (fig. 10).⁵⁵ If we understand material culture in this way, there will be no inner homogeneity, no distinct boundary, and no chance to see continuity of a whole culture. Every 'archaeological culture' possesses different 'levels' and many different roots. The search for the 'main' origin of a culture does not get us any further. We can try, but would we have any success?

'Ethnic groups' are held together by a *belief* in common culture (costume, law, language, *habitus*) and in common descent. This identity is a 'construction of reality', which pursues social aims. It has a kernel (*Traditionskern*) and a diffuse periphery. Ethnic identity is used flexibly, and is dependent on the contextual situation, as studies in ethnology (anthropology), sociology, and history show. Identity evolves only in confrontation with 'the other(s)' — identity needs alterity, the conception of others (foreigners) from whom to differ. Identities are not stable over longer periods of time. They may change at critical moments, and an individual person can change identity group through particular *rites de passage*. Finally, a role-playing can be observed; in different contexts, each individual plays different social roles, so that 'ethnic identity' is only *one* part of each person's identity. In real life, conceptions of belonging to associations other than ethnic ones — to lineages, families, classes of age and classes of marriage, or socio-professional groups — were and are far more important.

In order to demonstrate ethnic relationship (at least, belief in it), groups select particular distinguishing cultural features. Selection is essential, because ethnic groups share most cultural, social, and economic characteristics with their neighbours. The choice of characteristics is arbitrary — anything can become a symbol of ethnic relevance. But the choice has to be oriented towards cultural and social realities and their context. Only features which make sense, which plausibly are able to distinguish groups,

⁵² Hans-Peter Wotzka, 'Zum traditionellen Kulturbegriff in der prähistorischen Archäologie', *Paideuma*, 39 (1993), 25–44.

⁵³ E.g. V. Gordon Childe, *The Danube in Prehistory* (Oxford, 1929).

⁵⁴ Cf. Veit, 'Gustaf Kossinna und V. Gordon Childe'.

⁵⁵ David Leonhard Clarke, *Analytical Archaeology* (London, 1968), p. 147, fig. 20; p. 246, fig. 53; p. 300, fig. 58.

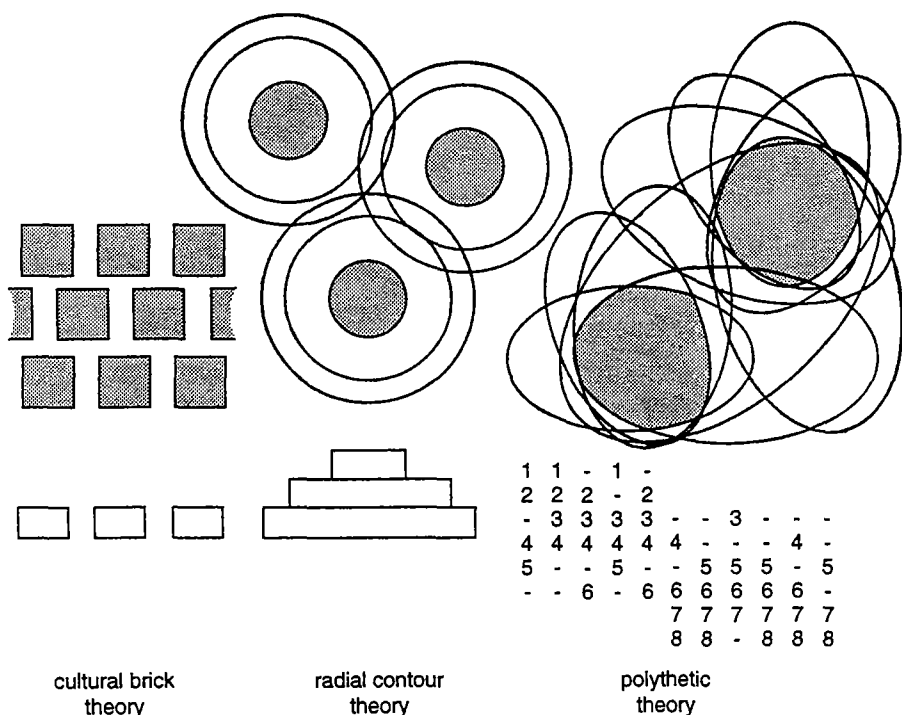


Fig. 10. Schematic model of a 'polythetic' culture in archaeology. It expresses the distribution boundaries of different artefact types, burial customs, settlement, technology, agriculture, trade, and religion. Only variation in space is shown, not change through time. To define an 'archaeological culture', one takes an area (and a chronological phase) with definite traits of culture. The 'culture' is far from homogeneous, and the boundaries depend on the selected artefacts — it is an 'arbitrary' classification (varied after Clarke, *Analytical Archaeology*, p. 300, fig. 58).

can be used. Particular elements of costume, language cultivation, aims and strategies of education, manners, ways of communication, and interaction are purposefully raised and intensified as 'principal' ethnic differences. So on the one hand, nearly any part of material culture *could* have demonstrated 'ethnic identity'. And on the other, it is possible that no *material* sign was important; *habitus* and people's actions could have been the only relevant way that an *ethnos* differentiated itself from its neighbours. Semiotics shows that every sign is arbitrary.⁵⁶ Therefore there could be no general approach to these signs.

Archaeology has no approach to material 'ethnic' signs because such signs were not mentioned in written sources — so we have no inside report, no message about the

⁵⁶ Cf. Umberto Eco, *Semiotik: Entwurf einer Theorie der Zeichen*, 2nd edn (Munich, 1991).

meaning of things. If material signs existed, they were used flexibly. Differences in ceramic or jewellery styles *may* have been of ethnic relevance. But archaeologists have no opportunity to find out whether stylistic differences were important and were used, for example, as ethnic signs or as apotropaic symbols; or as marks of special, high quality workshops; or for something else. We see cultural traditions, but we cannot know in detail their meaning, their spiritual background, or their importance for past mentalities and identities. There is no hermeneutic path to a real understanding, despite the hopes of some 'contextual archaeologists'.⁵⁷ Archaeology observes only the frame or the context in which archaeological finds occur. At best, we get an understanding of this context, not of individual symbols and situations.

In general, archaeology can not apprehend and explain individuals.⁵⁸ Archaeological sources are 'silent witnesses' which can be made to speak solely through comparison and analogy. Only regular and structural phenomena can be compared and reasonably classified. Exceptional phenomena, isolated historical cases, and individualities (apart from some particular cases, such as the burial of king Childeric, † 482, identified by his signet-ring with the inscription *Childerici regis*) resist in principle analogy and reliable archaeological classification.⁵⁹ We may see or feel the exceptional character of an individual assemblage of finds, but we are not able to understand the individual context. That is why archaeological research focuses on structural explanations. Seen from this background, it is not possible to decide whether the objects in a particular grave, whatever its context, report the life-story of an individual or rather reflect relations and gifts.⁶⁰ It can hardly be determined whether 'foreign' goods in particular graves of early medieval cemeteries indicate a 'foreign' individual (e.g. a woman who is 'foreign' because of exogamy), or just wider relations between elites, and relics of gift exchange, trade, or plunder. We may assume that costume primarily reflects social identities *within* a society, because these differences are essential and have to be demonstrated in everyday life. Ethnic demarcation has relevance in confrontation with 'others', and this

⁵⁷ Cf. *The Ancient Mind: Elements of Cognitive Archaeology*, ed. by Colin Renfrew and Ezra B. W. Zubrow (Cambridge, 1994); *Reader in Archaeological Theory: Post-Processual and Cognitive Approaches*, ed. by David S. Whitley (London, 1998).

⁵⁸ Cf. Karl J. Narr, 'Das Individuum in der Urgeschichte: Möglichkeiten seiner Erfassung', *Saeculum*, 23 (1972), 252–65.

⁵⁹ Manfred K. H. Eggert, 'Archäologie heute: Reflexionen 1993', *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz*, 41 (1994), 3–18 (p. 7).

⁶⁰ Volker Bierbrauer (Hermann Büsing, Andrea Büsing-Kolbe, and Volker Bierbrauer, 'Die Dame von Ficarolo', *Archeologia medievale* (Firenze), 20 (1993), 303–332 (p. 330)), reconstructs the life-story of a woman buried in Italy as follows: she was born and grew up in the Carpathian basin (a Gepid or an Ostrogoth?) in the mid-fifth century (brooch and belt), then went to the south-western Alemannian area near Bâle (pin), and in 496/506 fled to northern Italy (burial). Why could this woman not have been born in Italy and assembled her costume there? The mistake is to assume a 'national costume' one individual bears from birth to death (see n. 43 above).

is only the case in some special situations. So graves are primarily of *social* relevance to archaeology.

Archaeological interest has to focus on the history of structures — the so-called *longue durée*. In most cases, the identification of long-term developments (which archaeology can identify) with short term political and ethnic situations (which history reconstructs) is wrong. Linguistic groups and anthropological clusters are yet other perspectives on historic reality. Every science has its own views on the past, and these views are not congruent; they have their own classifications and limitations. Together, all these aspects allow a deep insight into the past, but they do not reach the ideal of an *histoire totale*. Archaeological realities traditionally interpreted as ethnic groups have to be revised — as (dynamic) regions of economy and transport, circles of marriage, cultural or production areas, spaces of sepultures, and techniques. We can see connections within and between regions, but beyond this structural insight the background is not easy to describe. To emphasize structural explanations is not a renunciation of a historical approach in archaeology — because history is not just a series of political events. Economic, social, and cultural structures played important roles below the surface of history. In this view, archaeology has a position between cultural anthropology and history.⁶¹

Relationships between archaeologically described, long-term developments and political events and identities are differentiated and broken in manifold ways. Identity is an important reality but is not directly reflected in material and social realities. To connect 'material culture' and 'ethnic identity' mixes up different historical aspects. There is no direct path from archaeological finds to past identities, and that is why in every *individual* case we have to ask what historic interpretation is most appropriate. One global and specific interpretation such as the 'ethnic paradigm' cannot describe historical reality (cf. fig. 8). In most cases, we have to deal with multicausal explanations for the spatial spread and change in time of material culture. Here a broad field opens up to archaeology in interpreting cultural, economic, and social conditions and developments. The more (archaeological and written) sources we have, the better and more differentiated are our insights, because we can exclude some improbable explanations. An alternative to the 'ethnic' paradigm is not evident.

My view is in a sense a 'pessimistic' one. I cannot see any way that archaeology could identify 'ethnic identities' of the past. The search for ethnic groups follows the national(istic) imagination of the last two hundred years, and does not meet the expressiveness of archaeological sources.⁶² That is why every essay remains a construction. To adopt structural history as *the* alternative for archaeology (this is the

⁶¹ Ulrich Veit, 'Zwischen Geschichte und Anthropologie: Überlegungen zur historischen, sozialen und kognitiven Identität der Ur- und Frühgeschichtswissenschaft', *Ethnographisch-archäologische Zeitschrift*, 36 (1995), 137–43.

⁶² Hans Jürgen Eggers, *Einführung in die Vorgeschichte*, 3rd edn (Munich, 1986), p. 274, already saw the main mistake in Kossinna's approach.

'optimistic' part of my view) is not a heavy loss. This approach considers the 'ladders of inference'.⁶³ 'Ethnic identity' is beyond the reach of archaeology, whether it was important in early history or not (this is a question for historiography). The archaeological search for 'ethnic identities' was not of scientific interest, but more or less a matter of national discourse and nationalistic emphasis. It was used for the construction of modern national identities.

⁶³ Christopher Hawkes, 'Archaeological Theory and Method: Some Suggestions from the One World', *American Anthropologist*, 56 (1954), 155–68 (pp. 161–62).

Volkstum as Paradigm: Germanic People and Gallo-Romans in Early Medieval Archaeology since the 1930s

HUBERT FEHR

This paper is concerned with the history of the ethnic interpretation of burials in early medieval Gaul and, to a lesser extent, Visigothic Spain. While earlier generations of scholars regarded the Merovingian row-grave cemeteries as the remains of an ethnically homogeneous population, it has become increasingly popular within the last few decades to distinguish archaeologically between several Germanic and non-Germanic groups.¹ According to some scholars, the burial data even proves the

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¹ Horst W. Böhme, 'Les Thuringiens dans le Nord du royaume franc', *Revue Archéologique de Picardie*, 3–4 (1988), 57–69; Alfried Wiczorek, 'Identität und Integration: Zur Bevölkerungspolitik der Merowinger nach archäologischen Quellen', in *Die Franken: Wegbereiter Europas*, 1, 346–57; Volker Bierbrauer, 'Les Wisigoths dans le royaume franc', *Antiquités nationales*, 29

existence of a 'multicultural' society in northern Gaul in the late fifth and early sixth centuries.² It seems reasonable to assume that it was not by chance that, during the same period, historiography has shifted its focus from supposedly stable ethnic units to ethnogenetic processes. This nearly symmetrical development has fostered the traditional co-operation of archaeology and history in research on early medieval ethnicity. Archaeology has been regarded as valuable for research into ethnogenesis because it promises to establish the spatial and demographic dimensions of ethnogenetic processes, which are often hard to reconstruct from written sources alone. Occasionally, archaeology has even tried to identify migrating 'cores of tradition' (*Traditionskerne*), as in the case of Bavarian ethnogenesis.³

A prerequisite to all archaeological research into ethnogenesis, however, is identification of the different groupings within the archaeological record. The problem of ethnic interpretation of archaeological material in general has been the subject of long and fierce debates in the past, and we are still far from a consensus.⁴ But apart from this fundamental debate, it is necessary — and maybe even more fruitful — to review the plausibility of currently used ethnic interpretations on a case-to-case basis. On the following pages, I will reconsider only the most traditional and basic ethnic differentiation within the row-grave cemeteries: the distinction between Germanic and Gallo-Roman burials. This separation is especially important, not only because it deals with the interesting question of how 'Germanic' — with regard to its descent — the population of the Merovingian kingdom actually was, but also because it served as an archaeological model for further ethnic differentiations of the row-grave cemeteries.

A critical review of the historical and methodological foundations of this distinction is necessary for two reasons. On the one hand, recently there have been growing doubts in archaeology whether material culture reflects such flexible and situational identities as ethnicity at all.⁵ It has been argued that ethnic interpretations of archaeological material are, to a certain extent, mere scientific constructs, which fail to describe

(1997), 167–200; Michel Kazanski and Patrick Périn, 'Les barbares "orientaux" dans l'armée romaine en Gaule', *Antiquités nationales*, 29 (1997), 201–17; Gabriele Graenert, 'Langobardinnen in Alamannien', *Germania*, 78 (2000), 417–47.

² Ursula Koch, Karin von Welck, and Alfred Wiczorek, 'Die Bevölkerung Nordgalliens: Einheimische und Fremde: Einleitung', in *Die Franken: Wegbereiter Europas*, II, 840–41 (p. 841).

³ See e.g. the interpretation of the distribution of the Friedenhain-Preßt'ovice style pottery as the result of the supposed immigration of a Bavarian *Traditionskern*: Thomas Fischer and Hans Geisler, 'Herkunft und Stammesbildung der Baiern aus archäologischer Sicht', in *Die Bajuwaren: Von Severin bis Tassilo, 488–788*, ed. by Hermann Dannheimer and Heinz Dopsch (Munich, 1988), pp. 61–69 (p. 68).

⁴ Veit, 'Ethnic Concepts in German Prehistory'.

⁵ Jones, *Archaeology of Ethnicity*.

thoroughly the reality of the early Middle Ages.⁶ Additionally, within the last decade it has become clear that, throughout Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there was a close connection between the archaeological reconstruction of ethnic identities and the construction of national or regional identities.⁷ Although it is surely inaccurate to categorize all interaction between political or societal developments on the one hand and ethnic interpretations of archaeological material on the other under the term 'nationalism', it is indisputable that political influences on and political uses of ethnic interpretations were quite common.

The second motive for this review arises from the fact that there is no such thing as an 'independent' ethnic interpretation in early medieval archaeology. The validity of each ethnic interpretation in this field depends to a large extent on the historiographic framework in which it is placed. Because of this, it has to be expected that the fundamental historical research on the nature of early medieval ethnic groupings since Reinhard Wenskus's *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* must inevitably have major consequences on archaeological interpretation of burial data.

A recent article by Volker Bierbrauer gives a good summary of a widespread archaeological view of the relationship between the Germanic and the Gallo-Roman populations in the early medieval kingdom of the Franks.⁸ He regards the indigenous Gallo-Roman population and the Germanic-speaking Franks as two different ethnic groups. Bierbrauer argues that they belong to two opposing 'cultural models' (*Kulturmodelle*) and that these cultural models are clearly detectable within the burial data. According to him, a process of acculturation took place between these two groups during the Merovingian period. One of the final products of this process was the formation of the Germanic-Romanic language border.⁹ These two cultural models are defined by the layout of their graves and the method of furnishing them. The main defining features of the Gallo-Roman cultural model are the lack of grave goods and a particular burial rite.

⁶ Sebastian Brather, 'Ethnische Identitäten als Konstrukte der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie', *Germania*, 78 (2000), 139–77. See also Brather in this volume.

⁷ There has been a succession of recent volumes dedicated to this subject: *Nationalism, Politics, and the Practice of Archaeology*, ed. by Philip L. Kohl and Clare Fawcett (Cambridge, 1995); *Nationalism and Archaeology in Europe*, ed. by Margarita Díaz-Andreu and Timothy Champion (London, 1996); *Nationalism and Archaeology: Scottish Archaeological Forum*, ed. by John A. Atkinson, Iain Banks, and Jerry O'Sullivan (Glasgow, 1996); *Cultural Identity and Archaeology: The Construction of European Communities*, ed. by Paul Graves-Brown, Siân Jones, and Clive Gamble (London, 1996).

⁸ Volker Bierbrauer, 'Romanen im fränkischen Siedelgebiet', in *Die Franken: Wegbereiter Europas*, I, 110–20. For a similar view, see e.g. Ursula Koch, 'Stätten der Totenruhe: Grabformen und Bestattungssitten der Franken', in *Die Franken: Wegbereiter Europas*, II, 723–37 (pp. 723–24).

⁹ Bierbrauer, 'Romanen im fränkischen Siedelgebiet', p. 110.

Typical for the Roman cultural model is the frequent occurrence of stone settings or sarcophagi and multiple burials.¹⁰ The typical Germanic grave, however, is furnished with grave goods. Women's graves contained metal parts of their clothing, while men frequently were buried with weapons. Both weapons and clothing have been regarded in archaeology as the personal belongings of the deceased, and described as their 'Tracht'.¹¹ I will return later to the term *Tracht*, which is important in this context. Concerning the two different burial rites, however, it has to be stressed that both groups were thought to have buried their dead in row-grave cemeteries and sometimes even in the same one, for example at Dieue-sur-Meuse in Lorraine.¹² Additionally, all archaeologists agree that there are no different types of grave goods. On this level, the row-grave cemeteries are very homogeneous.

This view has its roots in two classic works, which have hitherto been regarded as fundamental for the distinction between Germanic and Gallo-Roman burials. Hans Zeiss's article on the Germanic grave findings in the area between the Loire and Seine rivers was published in 1942.¹³ Joachim Werner's famous essay on the origins of the *Reihengräberzivilisation*, which has been the starting point for all research in this direction up to now, appeared only a few years later.¹⁴ But for a proper understanding

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 111.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 112.

¹² Ibid., p. 113; Hermann Ament, 'Das Gräberfeld von Dieue-sur-Meuse, ein Bestattungsort von Franken und Romanen', *Acta Praehistorica et Archaeologica*, 7–8 (1976–77), 301–10. There was severe criticism of Ament's theory soon after publication: Patrick Périn, 'A propos de publications récentes concernant le peuplement en Gaule à l'époque mérovingienne: la "question franque"', *Archéologie Médiévale*, 11 (1981), 125–45 (p. 128). This critique has recently been confirmed: Uwe Fiedler, 'Zu Hermann Aments These eines romanischen Bestattungsareals auf dem merowingerzeitlichen Gräberfeld von Dieue-sur-Meuse', *Acta Praehistorica et Archaeologica*, 30 (1998), 244–52.

¹³ Hans Zeiss, 'Die germanischen Grabfunde des frühen Mittelalters zwischen mittlerer Seine und Loiremündung', *Bericht der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission*, 31 (1941), 5–173; quoted as fundamental for the separation of Germanic and Roman burials in e.g. Frank Siegmund, *Alemannen und Franken*, RGA Ergänzungsbände, 23 (Berlin, 2000), p. 29; Frauke Stein, 'Die Bevölkerung des Saar-Mosel-Raumes am Übergang von der Antike zum Mittelalter', *Archaeologia Mosellana*, 1 (1989), 89–195 (p. 152); Hermann Ament, 'Franken und Romanen im Merowingerreich als archäologisches Forschungsproblem', *Bonner Jahrbücher*, 178 (1978), 377–94 (p. 378).

¹⁴ Joachim Werner, 'Zur Entstehung der Reihengräberzivilisation: Ein Beitrag zur Methode der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie', *Archaeologia Geographica*, 1 (1950), 23–32; here cited from *Siedlung, Sprache und Bevölkerungsstruktur im Frankenreich*, ed. by Franz Petri, Wege der Forschung, 49 (Darmstadt, 1973), pp. 285–325. For the importance of this paper, cf. Guy Halsall, 'The Origins of the *Reihengräberzivilisation*: Forty Years On', in *Fifth-Century Gaul*, pp. 196–207 (pp. 196–97).

of the political and scientific circumstances of the genesis of Zeiss's and Werner's works, we have to go back further, to the period following World War I.

At the end of World War I, early medieval archaeology already had a long tradition both in France and in Germany; nevertheless it played only a marginal role within the whole field of archaeology. This situation changed significantly after World War I. In Germany, interest in early medieval burial archaeology grew increasingly, while research in France came almost to a complete end.¹⁵ Paradoxically, these contrasting developments had the same cause: the majority of both French and German archaeologists shared the opinion that row-grave cemeteries were the product mainly of a Germanic population; simultaneously, both equated 'Germanic' more or less directly with 'German'.

In Germany during the period following World War I, interest in early medieval burial archaeology can be divided into two phases. During the first phase in particular, in the 1920s and 1930s, some historians developed a new interest in the subject. This resulted from the discovery of archaeology as a complementary science for history. The second phase is connected with the decisive period of professionalization of prehistoric archaeology in Germany during the late 1920s and especially during the 1930s. In this period, a first generation of academic early medieval archaeologists took over archaeological research completely. They also took over — and this is very important — a good share of the scientific questions which previously historians had tried to solve with the help of early medieval archaeology.

One historiographical direction in particular discovered archaeology as a complementary subject: the so-called *Volksgeschichte* ('people's history'), over whose ideological motivations there has been much debate in recent years.¹⁶ The rise of this hyper-ethnocentric approach is closely connected with the political situation in central Europe after World War I. The end of the Great War had consequences on the historical sciences in many ways. A significant number of German scholars felt a strong urge to help their country and their people to recover from what was felt to have been not just a military, but also a cultural defeat. Some historians were convinced that the traditional approach of German historiography was not sufficient to write the kind of history needed by the German people in this situation. Alongside the traditional and mainly political approaches to history, which was centred on kings, politicians, and states, a

¹⁵ Heino Neumayer, 'Geschichte der archäologischen Erforschung der Franken in Frankreich,' in *Die Franken: Wegbereiter Europas*, I, 35–42 (p. 41); Patrick Périn, *La datation des tombes mérovingiennes: Historique-Méthodes-Applications* (Genève, 1980), p. 57. There are notable exceptions to this rule on the history of Merovingian archaeology in France, especially the works of Édouard Salin and his model of the *fusion progressive*: Édouard Salin, *Rhin et Orient: Le Haut Moyen-âge en Lorraine d'après le mobilier funéraire* (Paris, 1939), p. 19.

¹⁶ For a recent summary: Willi Oberkrome, 'Historiker im "Dritten Reich": Zum Stellenwert volkshistorischer Ansätze zwischen klassischer Politik- und neuerer Sozialgeschichte', *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 50 (1999), 74–98.

modified approach was developed which tried to focus on the history of the 'people'.¹⁷ This new *Volksgeschichte* clearly had some characteristics in common with the so-called *Völkische* ideology.¹⁸ Both regarded a people as an organic unit, which was thought to be culturally, socially, and biologically homogeneous and unchanged in the essence of its being over long periods of time. *Volksgeschichte* aimed to research into the destinies of these units, mainly on a regional level. With the help of regional studies (*Landesgeschichte*), it tried to record all those cultural manifestations of the people which were thought to have been shaped by the ethnic substance of a people, their *Volkstum*. But not surprisingly, the conventional written sources did not easily reveal that the *Volkstum* was the basic driving force in history. Because of this, historians of the *Volksgeschichte* were forced to search for additional categories of sources. They tried to integrate the results of various different subjects like folklore studies (*Volkskunde*), geography, historical linguistics (especially place names and dialectal geography), physical anthropology in regard to racial studies, and, finally, archaeology. Adolf Helbok, who tried to establish an explicit theory of *Volksgeschichte*, even argued that archaeology had a very particular role among the complementary sciences.¹⁹ According to his theory, archaeology was especially valuable for early medieval history if it was conducted as the study of the *Volkstum*: 'In this way, it should furnish us historians with knowledge oriented to the problems of the *Volkstum*.'²⁰

One of the main objects of *Volksgeschichte* research were those Germans who lived outside the German Reich after the Versailles treaty. The so-called *Grenz- und Auslandsdeutschtum* ('Germans of the borders and abroad') were idealized because of their (supposed) struggle to maintain part of the German cultural area (*Deutscher Kultur- und Volksboden*). The fear that German *Volkstum* might decline among Germans living outside their national state was one of the main motivations for *Volkstumsforschung*. It was argued that this German area had been much larger in the past than it was in the present. Against this background, it surely was not by chance that many works of German archaeologists in the period between the wars dealt with those areas abroad once settled by Germanic people. Needless to say, many archaeologists and historians

¹⁷ Willi Oberkrome, *Volksgeschichte: Methodische Innovation und völkische Ideologisierung in der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft, 1918–1945*, *Kritische Studien zur Geschichtswissenschaft*, 101 (Göttingen, 1993), pp. 22–25.

¹⁸ On the history of the *Völkischen* ideology see: Günter Hartung, 'Völkische Ideologie', in *Handbuch zur 'Völkischen Bewegung', 1871–1918*, ed. by Uwe Puschner, Walter Schmitz, and Justus H. Ulbricht (Munich, 1996), pp. 22–41.

¹⁹ Adolf Helbok, *Deutsche Geschichte auf rassischer Grundlage*, *Volk in der Geschichte*, 1 (Halle, 1939), pp. 40–47.

²⁰ Helbok, *Deutsche Geschichte*, p. 42: 'Der Anteil der Vorgeschichte an der frühmittelalterlichen Geschichte liegt nicht dort, wo sie heute politische Geschichte zu sein versucht, sondern dort, wo sie frühgeschichtliche Volkstumskunde sein kann. [. . .] Als solche hat sie uns Historikern an der volkstumsgeschichtlichen Problematik ausgerichtete Erkenntnisse zu liefern.'

of this period — and not only in Germany — were very generous when came to defining their own people's area of settlement in the past.

As Peter Schöttler has shown in two fundamental essays, the Bonn school of regional history at the *Institut für geschichtliche Landeskunde der Rheinlande* was of special importance for research concerning the western parts of Europe.²¹ In works such as the *Historical Atlas of the Rhine Province*, Hermann Aubin and his colleagues tried to record the history of this area in numerous thematic maps.²² In 1926, Aubin's successor at Bonn, Franz Steinbach, published his *Studien zur westdeutschen Stammes- und Volksgeschichte* (*Studies in the History of the West German Tribes and People*).²³ This book was concerned with two questions which were already of great political importance at the time: first, the extent of Germanic settlement in early medieval Gaul; second, the way in which the Germanic-Romanic language border was formed. The political significance of this research stemmed from the fact that it formed part of so-called *Westforschung* ('western research'); that is, it constituted part of those scientific investigations which were supported by the German government from the early 1920s because they promised to supply results useful for political aims, especially the revision of the Versailles treaty.²⁴

Steinbach argued that the Germanic-Romanic language border does not mark the area where early medieval Germanic settlement in Gaul stopped. According to his

²¹ Peter Schöttler, 'Die historische "Westforschung" zwischen "Abwehrkampf" und territorialer Offensive', in *Geschichtsschreibung als Legitimationswissenschaft, 1918–1945*, ed. by Peter Schöttler, Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft, 1333, 2nd edn (Frankfurt, 1999), pp. 204–61; Peter Schöttler, 'Von der rheinischen Landesgeschichte zur nazistischen Volksgeschichte oder Die "unhörbare Stimme des Blutes,"', in *Deutsche Historiker im Nationalsozialismus*, ed. by Winfried Schulze and Otto Gerhard Oexle (Frankfurt, 1999), pp. 89–113. On the early history of the Institut für geschichtliche Landeskunde der Rheinlande: Marlene Nikolay-Panter, 'Geschichte, Methode, Politik: Das Institut und die geschichtliche Landeskunde der Rheinlande, 1920–1945', *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter*, 60 (1996), 233–62.

²² *Geschichtlicher Handatlas der Rheinprovinz*, ed. by Hermann Aubin and Josef Niessen (Köln, 1926). On Herman Aubin, the founder of the Institut für geschichtliche Landeskunde der Rheinlande, see Hans-Ulrich Volkman, 'Historiker aus politischer Leidenschaft: Herman Aubin als Volksgeschichts-, Kulturboden und Ostforscher', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 49 (2001), 32–49.

²³ Franz Steinbach, *Studien zur westdeutschen Stammes- und Volksgeschichte*, Schriften des Instituts für Grenz- und Auslandsdeutschtum an der Universität Marburg, 5 (Jena, 1926).

²⁴ On the history of *Westforschung*: Schöttler, '"Westforschung"'; Burkhard Dietz, 'Die interdisziplinäre "Westforschung" der Weimarer Republik und NS-Zeit als Gegenstand der Wissenschafts- und Zeitgeschichte', *Geschichte im Westen*, 14 (1999), 189–209. On the much more important eastern equivalent to *Westforschung*, not surprisingly called *Ostforschung*: Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards: A Study of Ostforschung in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, 1988).

theory, all northern Gaul was densely occupied by settlers of Germanic origin in the fifth century. In the following centuries, these settlers were Romanized up to the line where the later language border took shape. Steinbach did not intend to back up his theory in detail. Rather, he saw his book as a program for the future.²⁵ In this context, he stressed the importance of early medieval archaeology. In his eyes, only archaeology could produce reliable information on the amount of Germanic settlers within the borders of the former Roman empire.²⁶

Starting in the early 1930s, another important historian of the *Volks-geschichte*, Franz Petri, tried to prove Steinbach's theory. In his monumental book *Germanisches Volkserbe in Wallonien und Nordfrankreich* (*The Heritage of the Germanic People in Wallonia and Northern France*), Petri mainly used place names and archaeological sources to reconstruct early medieval Germanic settlement in this area (fig. 1).²⁷ The archaeological part of his book was largely based on Casimier Barrière-Flavy's 1901 catalogue of early medieval cemeteries.²⁸ For Petri, all these early medieval cemeteries were of clearly Germanic character and thus could be taken as proof of Germanic settlement.²⁹ In this respect, Petri contradicted parts of older research, which was of the opinion that not only the Germanic Franks but also the Gallo-Roman population was buried in the row-grave cemeteries.³⁰ Finally, Petri compared his results with those of the racial studies of Egon von Eickstedt, and argued that the Nordic race still remained dominant in a great part of northern France (fig. 2).³¹ As the result of his work, Petri concluded that in the early medieval period all northern Gaul up to the Loire river was inhabited by settlers of Germanic origin, who were Romanized during the Carolingian era.³²

While Petri studied the Germanic settlement in Gaul, one of the founding fathers of academic early medieval archaeology in Germany, Hans Zeiss, worked on a similar

²⁵ Steinbach, *Studien*, p. 4.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

²⁷ Franz Petri, *Germanisches Volkserbe in Wallonien und Nordfrankreich: Die fränkische Landnahme in Frankreich und den Niederlanden und die Bildung der westlichen Sprachgrenze*, 2 vols (Bonn, 1937). On the works of Franz Petri in general: Karl Ditt, 'Die Kulturräumforschung zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik: Das Beispiel Franz Petri (1903–1993)', *Westfälische Forschungen*, 46 (1996), 73–176.

²⁸ Casimir Barrière-Flavy, *Les arts industriels des peuples barbares de la Gaule du I^{er} au VIII^e siècle*, 3 vols (Toulouse, 1901).

²⁹ Petri, *Germanisches Volkserbe*, pp. 827–42.

³⁰ Such as the historians Godefroid Kurth and Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges: Kurth, 'Les nationalités en Touraine au VI^e siècle', in *Études franques* (Paris, 1919), I, 243–64 (pp. 261–62); Fustel de Coulanges, *Histoire des institutions politiques de l'ancienne France: La monarchie franque* (Paris, 1888), p. 296. In the 1930s, the opinions of Kurth and Fustel de Coulanges were again confirmed by Ferdinand Lot: *Les invasions germaniques* (Paris, 1935), p. 210.

³¹ Petri, *Germanisches Volkserbe*, pp. 853–56.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 987–89.

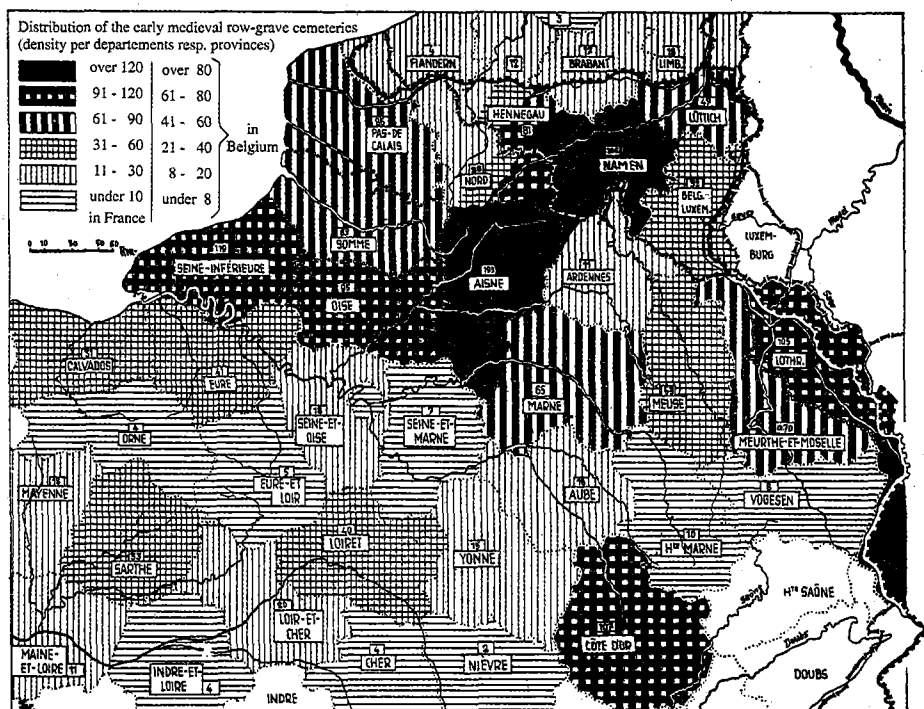


Fig. 1. Distribution of 'Germanic' row-grave cemeteries in northern Gaul
(after Petri, *Germanisches Volkserbe*, p. 812).

topic on the Iberian peninsula. Zeiss, a trained historian, had been in contact with the Bonn style of *Volkstumsforschung* before he started his career as an archaeologist. For a short period of time, he worked on a historical atlas of lower Palatinate, which was modelled after Aubin's historical atlas of the Rhine province.³³ Some of his essays from this period show close connections with the methodology and also the political aims of *Volkstumsforschung*.³⁴ In his book on the Visigoths, he developed the first steps toward a modified approach for identifying early medieval people, which is still widely used among early medieval archaeologists. Zeiss was very critical of the way older archaeological research identified people within the archaeological record.³⁵ He rejected Kossinna's approach of linking archaeological cultures with ancient people, at least for

³³ Hans Zeiss, 'Nachtrag: Der geplante pfälzische Heimatatlas', *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte*, 1 (1928), 93-95.

³⁴ See e.g. Hans Zeiss, 'Ortsnamen als Marksteine des Volkstums', *Volk und Rasse*, 3 (1928), 219-24.

³⁵ Hans Zeiss, 'Zur ethnischen Deutung frühmittelalterlicher Funde', *Germania*, 14 (1930), 11-24.

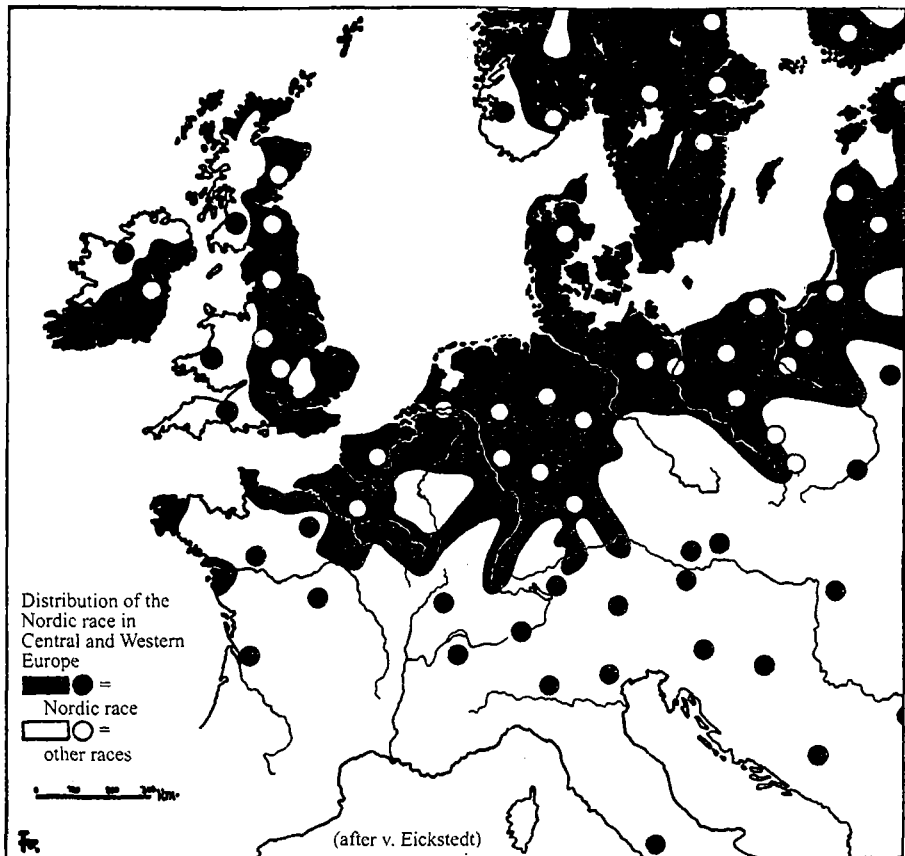


Fig. 2. The 'Nordic race' in northern Europe
(after Petri, *Germanisches Volkserbe*, p. 855)

the early Middle Ages.³⁶ At the beginning of his career, he even argued that archaeology was better suited for research into other subjects, such as the history of economics (trade and traffic), than for trying to link findings with ethnic communities.³⁷ His doubts,

³⁶ On Gustaf Kossinna and his influence on the development of the ethnic concepts in archaeology see Veit, 'Gustaf Kossinna und V. Gordon Childe'; idem, 'Gustaf Kossinna and His Concept of a National Archaeology', in *Archaeology, Ideology, and Society: The German Experience*, ed. by Heinrich Härke, *Gesellschaften und Staaten im Epochenwandel*, 7 (Frankfurt, 2000), pp. 40–64.

³⁷ Hans Zeiss, 'Die geschichtliche Bedeutung der frühmittelalterlichen Archäologie', *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 51 (1931), 297–306 (p. 304).

however, concerned only the early Middle Ages. For writing the prehistory of the Germanic people, he did not hesitate to use Kossinna's approach, tracing the Germanic people back to the Neolithic.³⁸

Zeiss was especially critical of attempts in archaeology to distinguish between different Germanic tribes. In this point he agreed with Steinbach, who had argued that the separation between various Germanic tribes did not develop until the early Middle Ages and thus could not be identified within the archaeological record.³⁹ Zeiss contradicted Herbert Kühn's assertion that the early medieval fibulae could be used to distinguish exactly between the different Germanic tribes.⁴⁰ With various examples, he showed that in many cases the distribution of certain types of fibulae did not correspond with the settlement area of a specific Germanic tribe.⁴¹ Because of this Zeiss argued that the fibulae were not necessarily typical of just one Germanic tribe.⁴²

This development, however, did not mean a rejection of the ethnic interpretation of archaeological data in general. It was just a shift in the level of the supposed ethnic identity. The differences between the great language groups such as the Germanic- and Romanic-speaking peoples played an even more important role than before. Zeiss seems to have never doubted that it is possible for archaeology to distinguish between these two groups. In his book on the archaeological material of the Spanish kingdom of the Visigoths, Zeiss developed a term, which became one of the central tools for identifying ethnic groupings in early medieval archaeology. He concentrated on only a few features within the archaeological record, which he thought were relevant for distinguishing between Germanic people and Romans. Despite the layout of the graves, he relied mainly on the metal remains of the clothing, especially the brooches.

Within material culture, clothing is especially suited for detecting identities. People have always used clothing as an expression of the social position of its bearer.⁴³ It constitutes a code which is used for social communication within societies. Because of this, the analysis of the development of dress styles offers good opportunities to identify cultural processes within societies.⁴⁴

While archaeological research nowadays regards as its main problem in this context the identification of the social groups which used a certain dress style, older research did

³⁸ Hans Zeiss, 'Die Ausbreitung der Germanen in Mitteleuropa', in *Das Reich und Europa*, ed. by Fritz Hartung and others (Leipzig, 1941), pp. 1–21 (pp. 1–7).

³⁹ Steinbach, *Studien*, pp. 117–20.

⁴⁰ Zeiss, 'Ethnischen Deutung', p. 11, against Herbert Kühn, 'Das Kunstgewerbe der Völkerwanderungszeit', in *Geschichte des Kunstgewerbes aller Zeiten und Völker*, ed. by Helmut Theodor Bossert (Berlin, 1928), I, 69–100 (p. 78).

⁴¹ Zeiss, 'Ethnischen Deutung', pp. 12–20.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁴³ Pohl, 'Telling the Difference', p. 40.

⁴⁴ Helge Gerndt, 'Kleidung als Indikator kultureller Prozesse', *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde*, 70 (1974), 81–92.

not focus on this problem; the kind of social groups involved in archaeological finds seemed to have been clear from the outset. Zeiss was sure that it could have been only ethnic identity which the inhabitants of early medieval Spain expressed with their clothing. For him, brooches constituted part of the Germanic national costume, or *Tracht*. Zeiss did not choose this interpretation by chance. Rather, he took up trends which were popular within folklore studies at this time. The German term *Tracht* is much more complex than its nearest equivalent in English, 'folk costume'. Several generations of folklorists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries collected the clothing of rural populations, which were glorified as the keepers of the traditions of an idealized past. It has only been in the last few decades that the discipline of folklore studies has realized that the *Volkstrachten* which were collected by folklorists all over Europe were a product of folkloricism and historicism, or in other words, merely 'museal illusions'.⁴⁵ Because of the problematic history of this term, folklore studies now argues that there is no longer any reason to use the concept of *Tracht* in science.⁴⁶

The term *Tracht* was also used by parts of older archaeological research, but only in a very unspecific way, as a mere synonym for clothing.⁴⁷ Hans Zeiss seems to have been the first in early medieval archaeology to apply the term *Tracht* consistently to all metal remains of clothing from a burial context. He defined it as the 'costume which all *Volksgenossen* ['people's comrades'] had in common'.⁴⁸ The use of the term *Volksgenossen* shows that the background for his interpretation of clothing accessories as parts of the Germanic *Tracht* was not simply the idea held by ancient ethnographers, that barbarian *gentes* could be distinguished from one another by their different costumes.⁴⁹ Rather, he regarded the Visigoths as a *Volksgemeinschaft*.⁵⁰ The term *Volksgemeinschaft* describes a utopian form of society, which is on the one hand socially and biologically homogeneous but on the other sharply separated from other *Volksgemeinschaften*. The utopia of such a socially homogeneous society was especially popular within the anti-democratic, right-wing part of German society between the wars. It also constituted a central slogan of Nazi ideology, especially if used with its racial connotation.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Gitta Böth, 'Kleidungsforschung', in *Grundriss der Volkskunde: Einführung in die Forschungsfelder der Europäischen Ethnologie*, ed. by Rolf W. Brednich, 2nd edn (Berlin, 1994), pp. 211–28 (p. 220).

⁴⁶ Böth, 'Kleidungsforschung', p. 220.

⁴⁷ See e.g. Georg Girke, *Die Tracht der Germanen in der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit*, Mannus-Bibliothek, 23 (Leipzig, 1922).

⁴⁸ Hans Zeiss, *Die Grabfunde aus dem spanischen Westgotenreich*, Germanische Denkmäler der Völkerwanderungszeit, 2 (Berlin, 1934), p. 138.

⁴⁹ Pohl, 'Telling the Difference', pp. 40–51.

⁵⁰ On the connection between the terms *Volksgenossen* and *Volksgemeinschaft*: Cornelia Schmitz-Berning, *Vokabular des Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin, 1998), p. 660.

⁵¹ Schmitz-Berning, *Vokabular*, pp. 654–59.

Because Zeiss regarded brooches as a part of the Germanic *Tracht*, he could exclude the possibility that Hispano-Roman subjects of the Visigothic kings could have taken over the practice of wearing fibulae. Thus fibulae were a clear ethnic marker of the Germanic people. Moreover, Zeiss's use of the term *Tracht* enabled him not only to identify the Germanic Visigoths among the majority of Hispano-Romans, but also to illustrate the disappearance of their identity as an ethnic grouping. In this point, Zeiss also took up a much older idea. Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, who had invented the term *Volkstum* during the German national movement at the beginning of the nineteenth century, had already seen a close connection between the keeping of a *Volkstracht* and the insistence of ethnic identity: 'As long as a small ethnic group bears its folk costume, it is protected against assimilation; but if it removes this defence, it will be subordinated from this moment on, and will lose itself among the majority.'⁵² Zeiss argued quite similarly: for him, Isidore of Seville's mention that the Visigothic king Leovigild had been the first in that office to adopt Byzantine-style regalia showed that the ethnic identity of the Visigoths was already severely disrupted at that point of time.⁵³ The disappearance of the Visigothic *Tracht* and the end of the row-grave cemeteries in Spain were for him the result of the Romanization of the Visigoths.⁵⁴ According to Zeiss, the existence of only a few, badly made 'Visigothic' brooches from the sixth century showed how the 'indigenous Roman *Volkstum* triumphs over those of the Visigoths, and that, due to racial mixture, the traditional Germanic character declines rapidly'.⁵⁵ Finally, at the end of the text, the connection to one of the main objects of *Volksgeschichte* research mentioned above becomes very clear. Zeiss compares the 'decline of the Visigoths' with the supposedly endangered *Volkstum* of Germans living outside their national state in his own time: 'It is one of those sad pictures of rootlessness and *Verwelschung* which still recur throughout the history of the Germanic people up to now.'⁵⁶ The term *Verwelschung* in this context is an untranslatable expression for Romanization, with a heavily negative connotation.

Now I will return to the research into Germanic settlement in France. Petri's work on the Germanic 'people's heritage' in northern France and Wallonia was well received in early medieval archaeology. Although Zeiss criticized several points, he agreed with

⁵² Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, *Deutsches Volksthum* (Lübeck, 1810), p. 313: 'So lange eine kleine eingedrungene Völkerschaft noch ihre volkstümliche Kleidung trägt, ist sie gegen Einschmelzung geharnischt; legt sie aber diese Wehr ab, so wird sie von dem Augenblick an untergesteckt, und lebt sich unter der größern Menge aus.'

⁵³ Zeiss, *Grabfunde aus dem spanischen Westgotenreich*, p. 138.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 142: 'Der gotische Einschlag verliert sich zur gleichen Zeit, zu der in Recht und Religion das romanische Volkstum über das westgotische siegt und mit der Rassenmischung die angestammte germanische Eigenart raschem Untergange entgegen geht.'

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 142: 'Es ist eines der traurigen Bilder von Entwurzelung und Verwelschung, welche sich in der Geschichte der Germanen bis auf den heutigen Tag wiederholen.'

Petri's main result concerning the Frankish settlement as far as the Loire river.⁵⁷ He praised the author for dealing 'with a deep feeling of responsibility' with a task which constitutes part of 'the *Volksgeschichte* which still today is of consequence'.⁵⁸ Simultaneously, however, he demanded that research should investigate certain 'non-Frankish' elements within the archaeological record.⁵⁹

Just a few years later, Zeiss received the opportunity to fulfil this demand himself. While political interest in studies such as Petri's works on Germanic settlement in France was already considerable in the prewar period, the importance of such research increased further during World War II.⁶⁰ Even leaders of the Nazi government took notice of it. After having read Petri's book in May 1942 — allegedly in just one night — Hitler declared it proved that 'according to place names and so on, these areas are old German lands which were stolen from us and which we can rightfully demand to be given back to us'.⁶¹

Following the German army that conquered France in 1940, many German scholars from different sciences and institutions took the opportunity to conduct scientific research. In the spring of 1941, the Archaeological Institute of the German Reich compiled a list of scientific objectives, which it pursued under the orders of the German Ministry for Education and Science (*Reichsministerium für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung*) during the following years. The objectives aimed to research different supposed waves of 'Germanic' influence on France from the Bronze Age to the early Middle Ages. The list consisted of the following eight points.⁶²

1. The first Germanic settlement beyond the Rhine river c. 700 BC.
2. Ethnic character and cultural significance of the South-German Urnfield-culture in Eastern France c. 1000 BC.
3. The development of cities, from Celtic hillforts to Roman settlements in the open country, to hillforts of the late Roman and early medieval periods [...].

⁵⁷ Hans Zeiss, Review of Franz Petri, *Germanisches Volkserbe in Wallonien und Nordfrankreich*, in *Historische Zeitschrift*, 156 (1937), 128–32 (p. 132).

⁵⁸ Zeiss, Review of Petri, p. 132: 'Dabei ist das Ganze getragen von dem tiefen Gefühl der Verantwortung vor einer Aufgabe, die in streng wissenschaftlicher Art und zugleich mit der Ehrfurcht behandelt werden muß, die einem Stück bewegter, bis auf den heutigen Tag fortwirkender Volksgeschichte gebührt.'

⁵⁹ Zeiss, Review of Petri, p. 131.

⁶⁰ Schöttler, "Westforschung", p. 212–22.

⁶¹ '[...] daß es sich nach den Ortsnamen und so weiter bei diesen Gebieten um altes deutsches Land handle, das uns geraubt worden sei und dessen Rückgabe wir mit vollem Recht verlangen könnten'; Henry Picker, *Hitlers Tischgespräche im Führerhauptquartier*, 3rd edn (Stuttgart, 1976), p. 263.

⁶² Wilhelm Schleiermacher, 'Bericht über die Tätigkeit der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission vom 1. April 1941 bis 31. März 1942', *Bericht der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission*, 31 (1941), 1–4 (pp. 1–2); Albert Grenier, 'Programme d'études', *Gallia*, 1 (1943), 284–87.

4. The completion of an inventory of important, still erect Roman monuments.
5. The separation of provincial Roman sculpture into general Roman works and indigenous provincial works.
6. [...] the study of middle-Gaulish terra-sigilata workshops and the separation of findings pertaining to the 'foederati-culture'.
7. A clear investigation into late Roman fortifications as an important prerequisite for understanding Frankish settlement.
8. Investigation of migration-period findings, especially Frankish, in France and Belgium.⁶³

Laurent Olivier has pointed out that the whole programme aimed to construct a cultural continuity of a Germanic population from the Bronze Age through to the early Middle Ages, in order to diminish the significance of Roman influence on Gaul.⁶⁴ In this context, Hans Zeiss started to work on the Frankish burials in the area between the Loire and Seine rivers. The first results of his works were published in the study mentioned above on the Germanic grave findings of that area. Zeiss's work was based on the Steinbach/Petri theory that all northern Gaul was populated by Germanic settlers. Although he did not share all Petri's views, he was sure that Petri's theory concerning the spatial extent of the Germanic settlement was correct.⁶⁵ As mentioned above, one of Zeiss's objectives was that future research should especially investigate certain 'non-Frankish elements'.⁶⁶

It was clear to Zeiss that not all early medieval cemeteries in northern Gaul could be taken as proof of the presence of Germanic people, as Petri had done. Because of this, he searched for archaeological criteria to distinguish between Germanic and Gallo-Roman burials. He found these criteria mainly in weapon-burial rites, because brooches or belt plates and fittings were only infrequently found in the area between the Loire and

⁶³ '(1) Die erste germanische Landnahme jenseits des Rheins bis zur Kanalküste um 700 v. Zw. (2) Völkische Art und kulturelle Bedeutung der süddeutschen Urnenfelderkultur in Ostfrankreich um 1000 v. Zw. (3) Die Entwicklung der Städte von keltischen Höhensiedlungen über römische Anlagen in den Ebenen zu spätrömischen und frühmittelalterlichen Bergstädten [...]. (4) Die Anfertigung von Bauaufnahmen von bedeutenden, noch aufrecht stehenden Denkmälern. (5) Die Scheidung von Allgemein-römischem und Einheimisch-provinziellem auf dem Gebiet der provinziäl-römischen Plastik. (6) [...] das Studium der mittelgallischen Terra-sigilata Werkstätten und die Aussonderung der zur sog. Föderatenkultur gehörigen Gegenstände. (7) Eine übersichtliche Untersuchung über das spätrömische Befestigungswesen als wichtige Voraussetzung für das Verständnis der fränkischen Besiedlung des Landes. (8) Die Bearbeitung der völkerwanderungszeitlichen, insbesondere fränkischen Bodenfunde in Frankreich und Belgien.'

⁶⁴ Laurent Olivier, 'L'archéologie française et le Régime de Vichy (1940-1944)', *European Journal of Archaeology*, 1 (1998), 241-64 (p. 250).

⁶⁵ Zeiss, Review of Petri, p. 130.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

Seine rivers. According to Zeiss, weapon burial was the most distinguishing feature of these 'Germanic' row graves.⁶⁷ Those burials which contained weapons could be regarded as burials of the Germanic *'Herrenschicht'*, who conquered Gaul and ruled over their Gallo-Roman subjects.⁶⁸ This means that weapons in the graves could be regarded as a marker for Germanic identity, because Zeiss saw a general social distance between the Germanic conquerors and the indigenous Gallo-Roman population. The historians of the *Volksgeschichte* took the same position. Franz Steinbach argued that the Frankish kings' Gallo-Roman subjects were legally inferior to their Frankish followers.⁶⁹ Contemporary to Steinbach, Heinrich Dannenbauer held the same opinion.⁷⁰ But a similar view had already been rejected by Fustel de Coulanges several decades before, and since Karl Friedrich Stroheker's 1948 book on the surviving senatorial noblemen in late antique Gaul, it has been clear that there was no such general social difference.⁷¹ Additionally, legal historians now confirm that there was also no legal difference in principle between Franks and Romans according to their ethnic origin.⁷²

The rejection of legal differences in principle between Gallo-Roman subjects and Frankish lords means that Zeiss's theory for distinguishing between Germanic and Gallo-Roman burials is based on a historical premise which can no longer be maintained. But there is another point which further disrupts the plausibility of Zeiss's ethnic differentiation. Apart from the theory of social difference between Germanic and Gallo-Roman populations, Zeiss's view also depends on the Steinbach/Petri theory, especially Petri's reconstruction of Germanic settlement according to the distribution of place-names. But this part of Petri's theory had already been devastatingly criticized by scholars of Romance languages soon after its publication. Ernst Gamillscheg had even argued that although scholarship should thank Petri for the collection of material, the scientific analysis had to be completely redone.⁷³ Gamillscheg's negative view of the validity of Petri's theory is confirmed by current linguists. Wolfgang Haubrichs has stated that Romance studies have destroyed the philological basis of Steinbach's and Petri's theory, and that all Petri's modifications in the postwar period could not change

⁶⁷ Zeiss, 'Germanischen Grabfunde', p. 9.

⁶⁸ 'Germanische Herrenschicht' and 'Romanische Untertanen': Zeiss, 'Germanischen Grabfunde', p. 31.

⁶⁹ Franz Steinbach, 'Austrien und Neustrien: Die Anfänge der deutschen Volkswendung und des deutsch-französischen Gegensatzes', *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter*, 10 (1940), 217–28 (p. 219).

⁷⁰ Heinrich Dannenbauer, 'Die Rechtsstellung der Gallorömer im Fränkischen Reich', *Die Welt als Geschichte*, 7 (1941), 51–72.

⁷¹ Fustel de Coulanges, *Monarchie franque*, p. 296; Karl Friedrich Stroheker, *Der senatorische Adel im spätantiken Gallien* (Tübingen, 1948).

⁷² Jean Durliat, 'Les Francs et les Romains devant la loi salique', *Dossiers d'Archéologie*, 223 (1997), 20–23 (p. 21).

⁷³ Ernst Gamillscheg, Review of Franz Petri, *Germanisches Volkserbe in Wallonien und Nordfrankreich*, in *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, 59 (1938), 370–78 (p. 378).

that.⁷⁴ Recently, he reminded early medievalists again that research should finally be given up on the Steinbach/Petri theory.⁷⁵ This fact had consequences for Zeiss's argument. Only because Zeiss agreed with Petri that there was a considerable Germanic settlement in the area between the Seine and Loire rivers, could he plausibly argue that all cemeteries which contained weapon burials were those of Germanic settlers. Without the linguistic parts of the argument, the ethnic interpretation of the archaeological materials is no longer conclusive.

Now I will turn to the second important work which is derived from the objectives of the German Archaeological Institute in World War II. During the war, Joachim Werner worked for the archaeological division of the Military Service for the Protection of Monuments (*Militärischer Kunstschutz des Heeres*) in France and Belgium. The archaeological division of this service was in effect a 'military branch' of the German Archaeological Institute.⁷⁶ The archaeologists who worked in it did not just take care of archaeological monuments in the occupied areas, but also took the opportunity to conduct research. Werner took over the sixth point of the objectives of the German Archaeological Institute listed above, 'the study of middle-Gaulish terra-sigilata workshops and the separation of findings pertaining to the "foederati-culture."' He started to investigate 'into the Germanic *laeti* settlement in the Gaulish provinces'.⁷⁷ Together with his research on Germanic burial ensembles of the fourth and fifth centuries in this area, he aimed 'to give his contribution to the study of the struggle between the Germanic and the Gallo-Roman populations within the area of northern France and Belgium'.⁷⁸ He

⁷⁴ Wolfgang Haubrichs, 'Germania submersa: Zu Fragen der Quantität und Dauer germanischer Siedlungsinselfn im romanischen Lothringen und Südbelgien', in *Verborum amor: Festschrift für Stefan Sonderegger zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. by Harald Burger, Alois M. Haas, and Peter von Matt (Berlin, 1992), pp. 636–66 (pp. 640–41).

⁷⁵ Wolfgang Haubrichs, 'Fränkische Lehnwörter, Ortsnamen und Personennamen im Nordosten der Gallia: Die "Germania submersa" als Quelle der Sprach- und Siedlungsgeschichte', in *Franken und Alemannen*, pp. 102–29 (p. 116).

⁷⁶ Julia Freifrau Hiller von Gaertringen, 'Deutsche Archäologische Unternehmungen im besetzten Griechenland 1941–1944', *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung*, 110 (1995), 462–90 (p. 465).

⁷⁷ Schleiermacher, 'Bericht über die Tätigkeit der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission', p. 2.

⁷⁸ 'Der Referent hat neben seinen als vordringlich betriebenen Verwaltungsaufgaben [...] die germanischen Bodenfunde des 4. und 5. Jahrhunderts in Belgien und Nordfrankreich systematisch aufgenommen und gedenkt, durch ihre wissenschaftliche Vorlage seinen Beitrag zum Studium der germanisch-romanischen Auseinandersetzungen im nordfranzösisch-belgischen Raum zu leisten'; German Archaeological Institute Archive, Berlin, file 18–11 (Auslandsbeziehungen RGK-Frankreich 1940–44): Joachim Werner, 'Gesamtbericht über die Tätigkeit des Referenten für Vorgeschichte und Archäologie beim Militärbefehlshaber in Belgien und Nordfrankreich (Militärverwaltungschef) in der Zeit vom 17. April bis zum 20. Dezember 1941', p. 2.

kept working on this subject after he became Professor at the newly founded Reichsuniversität at Strasbourg in annexed Alsace in 1942.⁷⁹ In autumn 1942 and spring 1943, he travelled again into the occupied areas in France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. At the end of this undertaking, he stated that his 'works, which promised to give an important contribution on the origin of the western ethnic border from an archaeological perspective, have come to a preliminary end'.⁸⁰ Werner did not manage to complete his work during the war, but published his main results a few years later in his famous essay 'On the Origins of the *Reihengräberzivilisation*'.

In contrast to many of his colleagues, during the Third Reich Werner never published a scientific work which could be used directly for political aims. He was, however, integrated into the deeply ideologically shaped scientific landscape of the Nazi state.⁸¹ Because there was no break in the research traditions in either history or archaeology, it is not surprising that his postwar works were in many respects linked to older traditions. Questions concerning the *Volkstum* were still on the agenda.⁸² All of Werner's postwar publications were based on the ethnic dichotomy 'Germanic' versus 'Roman'.

Joachim Werner saw himself as a pupil of Hans Zeiss, who was killed in the war in 1944.⁸³ Werner regarded Zeiss as the main founder of early medieval archaeology and also as the scholar who had developed the methodological tools which were used by later generations of early medieval archaeologists.⁸⁴ His essay 'On the Origins of the *Reihengräberzivilisation*' was the starting point for all later research in this direction. The subtitle of this study, 'A Contribution to the Method of Protohistorical Archaeology', indicates that Werner wanted not only to study the late antique roots of the row-grave cemeteries, but also to give a statement on methodology. In this article, he formulated for the first time Zeiss's approach to detecting ethnic identities in early medieval

⁷⁹ On the role of archaeology at the *Reichsuniversität* of Strasbourg: Jean-Pierre Legendre, 'Archaeology and Ideological Propaganda in Annexed Alsace (1940–1944)', *Antiquity*, 73 (1999), 184–90 (pp. 187–88).

⁸⁰ 'Die Arbeiten, die für die Entstehung der westlichen Volksgrenze einen wichtigen Beitrag von der Seite der Archäologie her versprechen, sind zu einem vorläufigen Abschluß gebracht'; Bundesarchiv Berlin, R 4901/alt R 21/WO 0798 43: Joachim Werner, 'Bericht über meine wissenschaftliche Tätigkeit in den besetzten westlichen Gebieten im Herbst 1942 und Frühjahr 1943'.

⁸¹ Fehr, 'Hans Zeiss, Joachim Werner und die archäologischen Forschungen', (n. 1 above).

⁸² Willi Oberkrome, 'Zur Kontinuität ethnozentrischer Geschichtswissenschaft nach 1945', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 49 (2001), 50–61.

⁸³ Joachim Werner, 'Feierstunde im Institut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte', *Chronik der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München* (1965/1966), 66–73 (p. 67).

⁸⁴ Joachim Werner, 'Hans Zeiss', in *Geist und Gestalt: Biographische Beiträge zur Geschichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften vornehmlich im zweiten Jahrhundert ihres Bestehens*, ed. by Friedrich Baethgen (Munich, 1959), I: *Geisteswissenschaften*, pp. 180–85 (pp. 182, 185).

archaeology: 'A separation between Germanic and Gallo-Roman is [...] possible only through detailed analysis of the *Tracht*- or burial rites.'⁸⁵

Werner's theory concerning the origins of the *Reihengräberfelder* also began with Frankish settlement in France and Belgium. According to him, Frankish settlement 'crossed the Bavai-Tongern line' peacefully soon after AD 400; during this development, the Frankish settlers founded individual villages within the area of the Gallo-Roman population.⁸⁶ The other root of the *Reihengräber*, however, was a certain group of burials with grave goods, which he attributed to the Germanic *laeti*. In this point, Werner contradicted Franz Petri, who had excluded the so-called *laeti*-graves as precursors of the row-grave cemeteries.⁸⁷ Because the vast majority of grave goods found in the graves of the *laeti* were clearly of Roman origin, Werner had to justify his claim that the people buried in these graves were of Germanic descent. Not surprisingly, he argued that the peculiarities of women's costumes were, as criteria for an ethnic interpretation, of equally high value as the weapon-burial rite in the men's graves.⁸⁸ In his eyes, a pair of fibulae was a sure confirmation of the Germanic *Volkstum* of a woman buried in a grave.⁸⁹ Compared with the interpretation of fibulae, it was harder to account for why the weapon-burial rite was specifically Germanic. Actually, the weapon-burial rite has hardly any precursors within the Roman area. But it is almost as rare in those areas of *Germania magna* whence the ancestors of the Franks are thought to have come.⁹⁰ On the other hand, Werner could not argue for a supposed general social distance between Germanic and Roman people in Late Antiquity, as Zeiss had done for the Merovingian period. Instead, he switched to a historical argument in order to avoid acknowledging that the weapon burial was neither Germanic nor Roman, but rather something new in the area of row-grave cemeteries. He suggested that, in contrast to the Gallo-Roman population, the Germanic *laeti* since the reign of Emperor Julian (361–63) could have received a privilege to carry weapons; subsequently, they started to have themselves buried with their weapons. Although Werner could not cite any written source for his theory concerning the privilege of Germanic *laeti*, he stated, 'In this respect, the weapon-burial rite in northern Gaul is a sign of nationality (*nationales*

⁸⁵ 'Eine Scheidung in Germanisch und Romanisch ist [...] nur durch verfeinerte Beobachtungen an *Tracht*- und Bestattungsbräuchen möglich': Werner, 'Zur Entstehung der Reihengräberzivilisation', p. 293.

⁸⁶ Werner, 'Zur Entstehung der Reihengräberzivilisation', p. 304.

⁸⁷ Petri, *Germanisches Volkserbe*, p. 784. On the *laeti*-graves in general, see Helmut Castritius, Horst W. Böhme, and Gabriele Wesch-Klein, 'Laeten und Laetengräber', in *RGA* XVII (2001), pp. 580–88.

⁸⁸ Werner, 'Zur Entstehung der Reihengräberzivilisation', p. 299.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

⁹⁰ Mechthild Schulze-Dörrlamm, 'Germanische Kriegergräber mit Schwertbeigabe in Mitteleuropa aus dem späten 3. Jh. und der ersten Hälfte des 4. Jh. nach Chr.', *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz*, 32 (1985), pp. 509–69.

Indizium).⁹¹ Finally, he emphasized the similarities between the *laeti*-graves and burials in *Germania magna*, which contained not weapons but fibulae and which also shared certain traits with those in Gaul.

As the result of his essay, Werner stated that the similarities between the two groups on each side of the border of the Roman empire could only be explained in so far as '*Tracht* and burial rite on one side and the other of the Roman border testify Germanic *Volkstum*'.⁹²

It has to be stressed that Werner's approach to detecting Germanic groups was not isolated in the postwar period, but was shared by other important early medieval archaeologists. Renate Pirling, for example, took a nearly identical view: 'Within women's graves, pairs of brooches are sure evidence for Germanic ethnicity [*Stammeszugehörigkeit*], like weapons in men's graves.'⁹³

But it was again Joachim Werner who further developed the concept of *Tracht*. At the beginning of the 1970s, he turned again towards the problem of explaining distribution patterns of early medieval metalwork. He discussed various possibilities including trade/exchange areas of workshops, travelling craftsmen, trade, and personal mobility. On this occasion, he did not decide for one single possibility. Only in very obvious cases, such as grave 421 of Altenerding, did he prefer to explain the occurrence of fibulae outside the central area of their distribution as the result of the mobility of the women who wore them as their *Tracht*.⁹⁴ But only a few years later, Werner changed his mind regarding this point. Now he stated that for explaining individual cases, the concepts of 'trade' and 'import' were no longer sufficient, and that all the possibilities connected with the mobility of people should first be taken into consideration.⁹⁵ According to him, the costume and weapons in the graves were always linked to specific peoples. If items such as fibulae or other personal items such as belt sets ('*Gürtelgarnituren*') were found in a 'foreign' area, they could not be regarded as trade goods but had to be seen as parts

⁹¹ 'In dieser Sicht kann die Waffenbeigabe in Nordgallien als nationales Indizium gelten': Werner, 'Zur Entstehung der Reihengräberzivilisation', p. 297.

⁹² 'Die auf den ersten Blick so frappanten Übereinstimmungen unserer beiden Gruppen lassen sich also zuletzt nur insofern auswerten, als Tracht und Ritus hier wie dort germanisches Volkstum bezeugen'; Werner, 'Zur Entstehung der Reihengräberzivilisation', p. 316.

⁹³ 'In Frauengräbern ist das paarweise Vorkommen von Fibeln ein sicheres Indiz für germanische Stammeszugehörigkeit, ebenso wie das Waffen in den Männergräbern sind': Renate Pirling, 'Romanen und Franken am Niederrhein: die Kontinuitätsfrage im Spiegel der Grabfunde von Krefeld-Gellep', *Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles*, 1 (1977), 96–103 (p. 98).

⁹⁴ Joachim Werner, 'Zur Verbreitung frühgeschichtlicher Metallarbeiten (Werkstatt-Wanderhandwerk-Handel-Familienverbindung)', *Early Medieval Studies*, 1 [= *Antikvariskt Arkiv*, 38] (1970), 64–81.

⁹⁵ Joachim Werner, 'Stand und Aufgaben der Frühmittelalterlichen Archäologie in der Langobardenfrage', in *Atti del 6° congresso internazionale di studi sull'alto medioevo*, Milano, 21–25 ottobre 1978 (Spoleto, 1980), pp. 27–46 (p. 45).

of specific *Trachten*.⁹⁶ Although this argumentation already sounds a little familiar, he stated that it was an entirely new approach. And he assured possible critics that 'this position, which may look to the non-specialists like overtaxing the possibilities of the archaeological sources, is on the contrary a new, methodologically well-founded way of interpreting the archaeological material of the Merovingian *Reihengräber*'.⁹⁷

It is not possible within this essay to show how, with the help of the concept of *Tracht*, archaeological research into migration grew increasingly popular over the last decades. The second pillar of Germanic population identification in early medieval archaeology, however, did not remain undoubted. In particular, arguments for an ethnic interpretation of weapon-burial rites changed significantly. In a paper in 1968 on arms and the weapon-burial rite in the Merovingian age, Werner discussed two different possible roots of weapon-burial rite; both were attributed to the Germanic sphere. As well as considering the theory that the weapon-burial rite stemmed from the Germanic *habitus* of providing the dead with equipment for the hereafter, he discussed the origin of the weapon-burial rite in 'Germanic' laws. At the end of the nineteenth century, the legal historian Heinrich Brunner had argued that a certain part of the personal belongings of the deceased were excepted from inheritance and that this part was originally buried with the dead.⁹⁸ The *Heergewäte* of the men included his weapons, and according to this theory the man had a right to this property even after his death. Legal historians, however, did not maintain the connection between *Heergewäte* and the grave goods.⁹⁹ According to Kurt Kroeschell, the *Heergewäte*, which is actually mentioned only after the twelfth century, is a typical example of the basic mistake made by the older school of legal historians, namely the use of much younger laws as sources to reconstruct an original 'Germanic' law.¹⁰⁰

It is due to this development that it has become increasingly difficult to justify why the weapon-burial rite was exclusively typical of Germanic people. A recent trend is to regard the weapons as part of the Germanic *Tracht*. In the article cited earlier, for

⁹⁶ Werner, 'Stand und Aufgaben der Frühmittelalterlichen Archäologie', p. 40.

⁹⁷ 'Diese Betrachtungsweise, die manchen Außenstehenden als eine phantasievolle Überforderung der Aussagemöglichkeiten des archäologischen Materials erscheinen könnte, ist ganz im Gegenteil ein methodisch gut fundiertes neuartiges Vorgehen bei der Interpretation des stark angewachsenen Fundstoffs aus den merowingerzeitlichen Reihengräberfeldern': Werner, 'Stand und Aufgaben der Frühmittelalterlichen Archäologie', p. 40.

⁹⁸ Heinrich Brunner, 'Der Todtentheil in germanischen Rechten', *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, germanistische Abteilung*, 19 (1898), 107–39 (pp. 118–19).

⁹⁹ Jean-Paul Jacob and Jean-Régis Mirbeau-Fauvin, 'Heergewäte et Gerade: "Les mots et les choses"', *Bulletin de liaison de l'Association Française d'Archéologie mérovingienne*, 3 (1980), 81–85.

¹⁰⁰ Kurt Kroeschell, 'Germanisches Recht als Forschungsproblem', in *Studien zum frühen und mittelalterlichen deutschen Recht*, Freiburger rechtsgeschichtliche Abhandlungen, n.s., 20 (Berlin, 1995), pp. 63–88 (pp. 68–69).

example, Volker Bierbrauer argues that the weapon-burial rite belongs to the 'Germanic' cultural model because the weapon constitutes a part of the *Tracht* of the male Frank.¹⁰¹

Another recent development concerns the problem of the existence of a 'Romanic' *Tracht*. Older archaeological research identified early medieval descendants of the Romans only through negative criteria, that is, the lack of typical 'Germanic' features.¹⁰² Only for some areas, for example within the Alps, was it argued that certain types of adornment belonged to a typical 'Romanic' costume.¹⁰³ It is already debatable whether this *Tracht* really belonged to regional groups of 'Romanic' people. But it is even more doubtful whether a regional model of a 'Romanic' *Tracht* could be used to identify 'Romanic' women in different areas of the former Roman empire. Frank Siegmund has employed the model of a 'Romanic' *Tracht*, which Volker Bierbrauer suggested for the 'Romanic' women of the Alps and northern Italy, to identify 'Romanic' women in the lower Rhine area in this way.¹⁰⁴ But the existence of a widespread 'Romanic' *Tracht* is highly improbable. The problem is closely connected with the term 'Romanic'. German research frequently uses the term *Romanen* ('Romanics') to describe the descendants of the former western Roman empire. The difference between this term and one like 'Gallo-Roman' seems at first to be marginal. While 'Gallo-Roman' stresses the continuity of the population of the former Gaulish provinces, the term *Romanen* focuses on the linguistic relationship of different populations in western and southern Europe. But 'Romanic' is a purely linguistic construction, and can not be used to describe ethnic or cultural phenomena. The inhabitants of the Roman empire were not culturally homogeneous during the reign of the Roman emperors, and there is no reason to assume that something like a common 'Romanic *Tracht*' developed only after the end of the Roman empire in the West.

Hagen Keller has recently demanded that archaeology should give itself a systematic and critical account of the topic of ethnic interpretations. Although the research of Hans Zeiss and Joachim Werner might have been fruitful for a certain period of time, such an account is necessary because historical research into early medieval ethnicity has

¹⁰¹ Bierbrauer, 'Romanen im fränkischen Siedelgebiet', p. 112.

¹⁰² Max Martin, 'Die Romanen', in *Ur- und frühgeschichtliche Archäologie der Schweiz*, vol. VI: *Das Frühmittelalter*, ed. by Walter Drack (Basel, 1979), pp. 11–20 (p. 11).

¹⁰³ E.g. Volker Bierbrauer, 'Kontinuitätsproblem im Mittel- und Ostalpenraum zwischen dem 4. und 7. Jahrhundert aus archäologischer Sicht', *Berichte zur deutschen Landeskunde*, 53 (1979), 343–70 (p. 348); idem, 'Zwei romanische Bügelfibeltypen des 6. und 7. Jahrhunderts im mittleren Alpenraum', in *Festschrift zum 50jährigen Bestehen des Institutes für Ur- und Frühgeschichte der Leopold-Franzens-Universität Innsbruck*, ed. by Andreas Lippert and Konrad Spindler, *Universitätsforschungen zur prähistorischen Archäologie*, 8 (Bonn, 1992), pp. 37–73 (p. 52).

¹⁰⁴ Frank Siegmund, *Merowingerzeit am Niederrhein*, *Rheinische Ausgrabungen*, 34 (Köln, 1998), pp. 239–40.

disqualified older assumptions on *Volkstum* and Frankish colonization in Gaul.¹⁰⁵ But it has to be stressed, with regard to the separation of 'Germanic' and 'Gallo-Roman' burials, that there has been already severe criticism, by for example Sigfried de Laet, Jan Dhondt, and Jaques Nenquin, Edward James, Bailey K. Young, Patrick Périn, Guy Halsall, Alain Simmer, and recently Françoise Vallet, to mention just the most significant voices.¹⁰⁶

This short review has shown that the development of the distinction between Germanic and Gallo-Roman burials in early medieval archaeology was stimulated by a specific political situation and close contact with the historiographical school of the *Volksgeschichte*. Even more important is the fact that the initial distinction was based on historical premises which can no longer be maintained. Over and above these liabilities, the modifications of methodology and argument from the postwar period up to now have still retained some of the axioms of the initial period, especially the concept of the Germanic *Volkstracht*. But when history now argues that it is not plausible for there to have been something like a Germanic *Tracht*, archaeology can not maintain this position either.¹⁰⁷ Alexander Koch maintains that there are still many arguments for the theories of Steinbach and Petri, and therefore the distribution analysis of the Germanic *Bügelfibeln* allows investigation into the 'exact extent and borders of the Frankish or — more generally — Germanic settlement in northern Gaul'.¹⁰⁸ This position, however, is already an anachronism.

¹⁰⁵ Hagen Keller, 'Strukturveränderungen in der westgermanischen Welt am Vorabend der fränkischen Großreichsbildung', in *Franken und Alemannen*, pp. 581–607 (pp. 587–88).

¹⁰⁶ Sigfried De Laet, Jan Dhondt, and Jacques Nenquin, 'Les *Laeti* du Namurois et l'origine de la Civilisation mérovingienne', in *Études d'Histoire et d'Archéologie Namuroise dédiées à Ferdinand Courtois* (Namur, 1952), I, 149–72; Edward James, 'Cemeteries and the Problem of Frankish Settlement in Gaul', in *Names, Words, and Graves: Early Medieval Settlement*, ed. by Peter H. Sawyer (Leeds, 1979), pp. 55–89; Périn, *Peuplement*; Bailey K. Young, 'Le problème franc et l'apport des pratiques funéraires (III^e–V^e siècles)', *Bulletin de liaison de l'Association Française d'Archéologie mérovingienne*, 3 (1980), 4–18; Halsall, 'Reihengräberzivilisation'; Françoise Vallet, 'Regards critiques sur les témoins archéologiques des Francs en Gaule du Nord à l'époque de Childéric et de Clovis', *Antiquités nationales*, 29 (1997), 219–44; Alain Simmer, *L'Origine de la frontière linguistique en Lorraine: la fin des mythes?*, 2nd edn (Knutange, 1998).

¹⁰⁷ Pohl, 'Telling the Difference', pp. 41–42.

¹⁰⁸ 'Im Mittelpunkt der folgenden Untersuchung steht, ausgehend von der Verbreitung germanischer *Bügelfibeln*, die Frage des genauen Ausmaßes und der Grenzen fränkischer und — allgemeiner — germanischer Einwanderung in Nordgallien': Alexander Koch, *Bügelfibeln der Merowingerzeit im westlichen Frankenreich*, 2 vols, Monographien des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums in Mainz, 41 (Mainz, 1998), II, 565–80 (p. 571).

In other cases, traditional positions have already been given up; one example is the classical theory of the Frankish conquest of Gaul.¹⁰⁹ But should it now be argued that it is better to reckon with a slow infiltration of Germanic groups during the fourth and fifth centuries than with an invasion, there yet remains the problem of how archaeology could trace such a process.¹¹⁰ The traditional concepts of ethnic interpretation in my opinion are not suited for such a task.

¹⁰⁹ Karl Ferdinand Werner, 'La "conquête franque" de la Gaule: Itinéraires historiographiques d'une erreur', *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes*, 154 (1996), 7–45; Horst Wolfgang Böhme, 'Söldner und Siedler im spätantiken Nordgallien', in *Die Franken: Wegbereiter Europas*, 1, 91–101 (p. 101).

¹¹⁰ Böhme, 'Söldner und Siedler', p. 101.

From Kossinna to Bromley: Ethnogenesis in Slavic Archaeology

FLORIN CURTA

Our present knowledge of the origin of the Slavs is, to a large extent, a legacy of the nineteenth century. The Slavic ethnogenesis remains a major, if not the most important, topic in the historiography of Eastern Europe. Those writing the history of the Slavs were initially scholars trained in comparative linguistics. Today, the authoritative discourse is that of archaeology. The purpose of this essay is to illuminate some of the circumstances in which archaeologists gained power in academic debates. Slavic archaeology will be examined within the broader context of the 'politics of culture' which characterizes all nation states as 'imagined communities'.¹ Slavic archaeology is a discipline crisscrossing national divisions of archaeological schools, but I will focus mainly on developments in Soviet archaeology.²

¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1991). Anderson suggests that the nation is a construct that requires representational labor, and is produced in and by representational work of some kind. Not surprisingly, most recent studies indebted to him focus on the articulation of national identity through language and literature, historiography, or art. Comparatively little attention has been paid to the use of archaeology for the construction of 'imagined communities', despite Anderson's emphasis on archaeology and museums (*ibid.*, pp. 178–85). See *Nationalism, Politics, and the Practice of Archaeology*, ed. by Philip L. Kohl and Clare Fawcett (Cambridge, 1995); *Nationalism and Archaeology in Europe*, ed. by Margarita Díaz-Andreu and Timothy Champion (London, 1996); *Archaeology under Fire: Nationalism, Politics, and Heritage in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East*, ed. by Lynn Meskell (London/New York, 1998).

² For the history of Soviet archaeology, see A. I. Ganzha, 'Etnicheskie rekonstruktsii v sovetskoi arkheologii 40–60 gg. kak istoriko-nauchnaia problema', in *Issledovanie sotsial'no-*

The idea of labeling geographically and temporally restricted assemblages of archaeological material as cultures or civilizations reflects a *fin-de-siècle* interest, in many areas of Central and Eastern Europe, with tracing ethnic identities in the archaeological record. Identifying ethnic groups in terms of material culture was a correlate of linguistic concerns with finding *Ursprachen* to be associated with known ethnic groups.³ The foundations of the culture-historical school of archaeology were laid by Gustaf Kossinna (1858–1931). A philologist turned archaeologist, Kossinna believed that ‘sharply defined archaeological culture areas corresponded unquestionably with the areas of particular peoples and tribes’.⁴ He linked this guiding principle to the retrospective method, by which he aimed at using the (ethnic) conditions of the present (or the historically documented past) to infer the situation in prehistory. The two together made up what he called the ‘settlement archaeology method’ (*Siedlungsarchäologie*). Kossinna emphasized the use of maps to distinguish between distribution patterns, which he typically viewed as highly homogeneous, and sharply bounded cultural provinces. He equated these provinces with ethnic groups, which he further identified with historically documented peoples and tribes. Though not the first to attempt to correlate archaeological cultures with ethnic groups,⁵ Kossinna viewed this theory as his *Glaubenssatz*.⁶ He was directly inspired by the Romantic idea of culture as reflecting the national soul (*Volksgeist*) in every one of its constitutive elements.

istoricheskikh problem v arkheologii, ed. by S. V. Smirnov and V. F. Gening (Kiev, 1987), pp. 137–58; Bruce G. Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 207–43; A. Formozov, ‘Arkheologiya i ideologiya (20–30 gody)’, *Voprosy filosofii*, 2 (1993), 70–82; Victor A. Shnirelman, ‘From Internationalism to Nationalism: Forgotten Pages of Soviet Archaeology in the 1930s and 1940s’, in *Nationalism, Politics*, pp. 120–38. See also Lev S. Klein, *Fenomen sovetskoi arkheologii* (St Petersburg, 1993).

³ Trigger, *History*, pp. 162–63; Hansjürgen Brachmann, ‘Archäologische Kultur und Ethnos: zu einigen methodischen Voraussetzungen der ethnischen Interpretation archäologischer Funde’, in *Von der archäologischen Quelle zur historischen Aussage*, ed. by Joachim Preuss (Berlin, 1979), p. 102.

⁴ Gustaf Kossinna, *Die Herkunft der Germanen: zur Methode der Siedlungsarchäologie* (Würzburg, 1911), p. 3. The English translation is that of Veit, ‘Ethnic Concepts of German Prehistory’, p. 39. For Kossinna and the culture-archaeological approach, see Leo S. Klejn, ‘Kossinna im Abstand von vierzig Jahren’, *Jahresschrift der mitteldeutschen Vorgeschichte*, 58 (1974), 7–55 (p. 16).

⁵ Before Kossinna, the Russian archaeologist Aleksandr A. Spitsyn had used maps to plot different types of earrings found in early medieval burial mounds in order to identify tribes mentioned in the *Russian Primary Chronicle*. See Formozov, ‘Arkheologiya’, p. 71.

⁶ Hans Jürgen Eggers, ‘Das Problem der ethnischen Deutung in der Frühgeschichte’, in *Ur- und Frühgeschichte als historische Wissenschaft: Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von Ernst Wahle*, ed. by H. Kirchner (Heidelberg, 1950), p. 49.

Today, it has become fashionable to attack Kossinna's tenets and, whenever possible, to emphasize his association with Nazism and the political use of archaeology. In reality, Kossinna's mistake was not so much that he aimed at an ethnic interpretation of culture, than that he used a dubious concept of ethnicity, rooted in Romantic views of the *Volk*. It is, therefore, no accident that after World War II, despite the grotesque abuses of Kossinna's theories under the Nazi regime, his followers passed over in silence the fundamental issue of equating *Völker* and cultures.⁷

One of the most intriguing aspects of the postwar history of Kossinna's approach to archaeology is its development within the field of Slavic studies. From the very beginning, the idea of identifying Slavs in terms of material culture was a correlate of linguistic concerns with finding the *Ursprache* of the early Slavs. Slavic languages were classified as Indo-European by Franz Bopp in 1833. Herder's concept of *Volk*, as unalterably set in language during its early 'root' period, made language the perfect instrument for exploring the prehistory of the Slavs.⁸ The cornerstone of all theories attempting to project the Slavs into Antiquity was Jordanes's *Getica*. Jordanes had equated the Sclavenes and the Antes to the Venethi also known from much earlier sources, such as Pliny the Elder, Tacitus, and Ptolemy.⁹ On the basis of this equivalence and of Bopp's recent classification of Slavic languages, Pavel Joseph Šafárik (1795–1861) made the 'Slavic tribe' a part of the Indo-European family. To Šafárik, the antiquity of the Slavs went beyond the time of their first mention by historical sources, for 'all modern nations must have had ancestors in the ancient world'. Šafárik's emphasis on language was very influential. During the late nineteenth century, many scholars employed place names, especially river names, for the reconstruction of early Slavic history. They chose Podolia and Volhynia, the regions with the oldest river names, as the appropriate *Urheimat* for the Slavs. Others argued that the homeland of the Slavs was a region devoid of beech, larch, and yew, for in all Slavic languages the words for those trees were of foreign (i.e. Germanic) origin. By contrast, all had an old Slavic word for hornbeam, which suggested that the *Urheimat* was within that tree's zone. On

⁷ Kossinna and *Volk*: Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, p. 137. Kossinna and Nazi archaeology: Bettina Arnold and Henning Hassmann, 'Archaeology in Nazi Germany: The Legacy of the Faustian Bargain', in *Nationalism, Politics*, pp. 70–81. Kossinna's theories after World War II: Leo S. Klejn, 'Die Ethnogenese als Kulturgeschichte, archäologisch betrachtet: neue Grundlagen', in *Beiträge zur Ur- und Frühgeschichte*, ed. by Hans Kaufmann and Klaus Simon (Berlin, 1981–82), I, 20; Veit, 'Ethnic Concepts in German Prehistory', p. 41.

⁸ Franz Bopp, *Vergleichende Grammatik des Sanskrit, Send, Armenischen, Griechischen, Lateinischen, Litauischen, Altslavischen, Gothischen und Deutschen* (Berlin, 1833); J. G. Herder, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by B. Suphan (Berlin, 1877–1912), xiv, 277–80; xvii, 58. Herder and the Slavs: Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, 1994), pp. 310–15; Henry Cord Meyer, *Drang Nach Osten: Fortunes of a Slogan-Concept in German-Slavic Relations, 1849–1990* (Bern/Berlin, 1996), p. 31.

⁹ Jordanes, *Getica*, 34, 119.

the basis of the modern distribution of those trees, many contended that the homeland of the Slavs was none other than the marshes along the Pripiet River, in Polesie.¹⁰

The rise of Slavic archaeology is associated with the name of Lubor Niederle. A professor of history at the Charles University in Prague, Niederle took Jordanes's account of the Slavic Venethi at its face value, endorsed the 'beech argument', and located the Slavic homeland in Ukraine. He argued that besides shaping the robust character of the Slavs, the nature of their *Urheimat* forced them into a rather poor level of civilization, for, like the ancient Germans and Celts, the Slavs were *enfants de la nature*. Only contact with the more advanced Roman civilization made it possible for the Slavs to give up their original culture based entirely on wood and to start producing their own pottery.¹¹

¹⁰ Paul Joseph Schafarik, *Slawische Alterthümer*, trans. by Mosig von Aehrenfeld (Leipzig, 1843–44), I, 40. Šafárik was not the only one to claim Tacitus's Venedi for Slavic history. Nor were his arguments entirely original. Wawrzyniec Surowiecki (1769–1827) had already used Jordanes to claim the Venedi of Tacitus, Pliny, and Ptolemy for Slavic history. A leading figure in the Polish national movement, Surowiecki set as his goal to prove that the Slavs (i.e. the Poles) were native to their own, at that time occupied, country. Inspired by Herder, he saw the Slavic Venethi as the largest European people in history, with a homeland stretching from the Vistula to the Dnieper and the Volga rivers. For Surowiecki, Šafárik, and Jordanes's Venethi, see Florin Curta, 'Hiding behind a Piece of Tapestry: Jordanes and the Slavic Venethi', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 47 (1999), 321–40 (pp. 321–24). For the use of river and tree names, see Tadeusz Wojciechowski, *Chrobacja: Rozbiór starożytności słowiańskich* (Cracow, 1873); A. L. Pogodin, *Iz istorii slavianskikh peredvizhenii* (Moscow, 1901); J. Rostafiński, *O pierwotnych siedzibach i gospodarstwie słowian w przedhistorycznych czasach* (Warsaw, 1908). See also Lucyna Szafran-Szadkowska, *Zagadnienie etnogenezy słowian w historiografii polskiej w okresie od średniowiecza do końca XIX stulecia* (Opole, 1983), pp. 105 and 115; Józef Kostrzewski, 'Über den gegenwärtigen Stand der Erforschung der Ethnogenese der Slawen in archäologischer Sicht', in *Das heidnische und christliche Slawentum: Acta II Congressus internationalis historiae Slavicæ Salisburgo-Ratisbonensis anno 1967 celebrati*, ed. by Franz Zagiba (Wiesbaden, 1969), I, 11; Valentin V. Sedov, 'Rannii period slavianskogo etnogeneza', in *Voprosy etnogenezy i etnicheskoi istorii slavian i vostochnykh romantsev*, ed. by V. D. Koroliuk (Moscow, 1976), pp. 70–71. Recent versions of such theories: Marija Gimbutas, *The Slavs* (New York/Washington, 1971), p. 23; Vladimir Danilovich Baran, 'Entstehung und Ausbreitung der frühslawischen Kulturen', in *Starigard/Oldenburg: Ein slawischer Herrsersitz des frühen Mittelalters in Ostholstein*, ed. by Michael Müller-Wille (Neumünster, 1991), pp. 29–51; Zbigniew Gołab, *The Origin of the Slavs: A Linguist's View* (Columbus, 1992), pp. 273–80. For a good survey of the most recent developments in Slavic linguistics, in which the 'Indo-European argument' refuses to die, see Henrik Birnbaum, 'Weitere Überlegungen zur Frage nach der Urheimat der Slaven', *Zeitschrift für slavische Philologie*, 46 (1986), 19–45, and idem, 'On the Ethnogenesis and Proto-home of the Slavs: the Linguistic Evidence', *Journal of Slavic Linguistics*, 1 (1993), 352–74.

¹¹ Lubor Niederle, *Slovanské starožitnosti*, 2nd edn (Prague, 1925), II, 513; idem, *Manuel de l'antiquité slave* (Paris, 1923–26), I, 49; II, 1–2 and 5. For Niederle's life and work, see Jan

Niederle's emphasis on material culture pointed to a new direction in the development of Slavic studies. Inspired by him, Vykentyi V. Khvoika (1850–1924), who had just 'discovered' the Slavs as bearers of the Tripolye culture of the Neolithic and Chalcolithic ages, also ascribed to the Slavs the fourth-century Chernyakhov culture. Similarly, the Russian archaeologist Aleksei A. Spitsyn (1858–1931) first attributed to the Antes hoards of silver and bronze artefacts found in central and southern Ukraine.¹² But the foundations of a mature Slavic archaeology were primarily the work of Czech archaeologists. It was a new type of pottery identified in 1870 by the German prehistorian Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902) that caused the greatest shifts of emphasis in the early years of the twentieth century.¹³ Emanuel Šimek, a professor of prehistory at Brno, put forward the suggestion that between Virchow's *Burgwallkeramik* and the Roman pottery there must have been an intermediary stage. He labeled this pottery the 'Veleslavin type', on the basis of finds from a residential area of Prague. Unlike Šimek, who believed this type to have been an imitation of the early Germanic pottery, Josef Schranil, Niederle's successor at the Charles University in Prague, argued that this type derived from the local Iron Age pottery.¹⁴ A similar idea was at the core of Ivan Borkovský's book, *The Ancient Slavic Pottery in Central Europe*. Borkovský argued that the main reason behind the adoption of Roman ornamental patterns by

Eisner, *Lubor Niederle* (Prague, 1948); Bohumila Zasterová, 'Lubor Niederle historik', *ArchRoz*, 19 (1967), 153–65.

¹² A. A. Spitsyn, 'Drevnosti antov', in *Sbornik statei v chest' akademika Alekseia Ivanovicha Sobolevskogo*, ed. by V. N. Peretsa (Leningrad, 1928), pp. 492–95. For Khvoika's life and work, see K. P. Bakhmat, 'Vykentyi Viacheslavovich Khvoika (do 50-rychchia z dnia smerti)', *Arheolohyia*, 17 (1974), 188–95; G. S. Lebedev, *Istoriia otechestvennoi arkheologii, 1700–1917* (St Petersburg, 1992), pp. 260–62; Victor A. Shnirelman, 'The Faces of Nationalist Archaeology in Russia', in *Nationalism and Archaeology*, p. 225. For Khvoika and Chernyakhov: V. D. Baran, E. L. Gorokhovskii, and B. V. Magomedov, 'Cherniakhovskaia kul'tura i gotskaia problema', in *Slaviane i Rus' (v zarubezhnoi istoriografii)*, ed. by P. P. Tolochko and others (Kiev, 1990), p. 33.

¹³ As early as 1847, G. C. F. Lisch had recognized the combed wavy line as a typical feature of Slavic pottery in northeastern Germany. The Czech archaeologists M. Lüssner and L. Šnjadr reached the same conclusion for the Bohemian material, but their finds fell into oblivion until Virchow revived the issue. See Karel Sklenář, *Archaeology in Central Europe: The First 500 Years* (Leicester/New York, 1983), pp. 95 and 125.

¹⁴ Emanuel Šimek, *Cechy a Morava za doby římské. Kritická studie* (Prague, 1923). See also Jiří Zeman, 'Zu den chronologischen Fragen der ältesten slawischen Besiedlung im Bereich der Tschechoslowakei', *ArchRoz*, 18 (1966), 157–85 (p. 170). Early Germans and Slavic pottery: Jan Eisner, 'Popelnicové hroby z doby hradištní na Slovensku', *Památky archeologické*, 40 (1934–35), 82–90 (p. 88). Local Iron Age origins: Josef Schranil, *Die Vorgeschichte Böhmens und Mährens* (Berlin, 1928). See also Helmut Preidel, *Die Anfänge der slawischen Bevölkerung Böhmens und Mährens* (Gräfelfing, 1954), I, 56.

Slavic potters was that Slavic pottery was genetically similar to Roman pottery. Both were based on Celtic traditions of pottery manufacture. When they came to Bohemia and Moravia, the Slavs had found remnants of the Celtic population still living in the area and had adopted their manufacturing techniques of Iron Age tradition. The result was what Borkovský called the 'Prague type', a national, exclusively Slavic kind of pottery. Borkovský defined this type as a hand-made, mica-tempered pottery with no decoration. He believed the Prague type to be the earliest Slavic pottery, the forms and rims of which slowly changed under Roman influence. Following Charlemagne's conquests in Central Europe, the Slavic Prague type was also adopted by the Franks and thus became the basis for all further developments of pottery manufacture in early medieval Europe.¹⁵

Borkovský's book was published a few months after the first wave of massive arrests and the closure of all universities and colleges in the protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia under Nazi rule. In his book, Borkovský boldly argued that the earliest Slavic pottery derived from local Iron Age traditions, not from the Germanic pottery. This was quickly interpreted as an attempt to claim that the Czechs (and not the Germans) were natives to Bohemia and Moravia. As a consequence, the book was immediately withdrawn from bookstores and Borkovský became a sort of local hero of Czech archaeology. His ideas, including the very influential suggestion that the Prague type represented the oldest Slavic pottery, were followed and developed after the war. Borkovský's book may be viewed as a reaction to Nazi claims that the Slavs were racially and culturally inferior. Although he laid more emphasis on culture than on race, Borkovský's book coincided with the first failure of the Nazis to pigeonhole the Czechs as racially inferior. In 1940, Karl Valentin Müller, a Dresden anthropologist, was sent to Bohemia to study archaeological sites, parish records, and burial inscriptions. His purpose was to rewrite the history of Bohemia and Moravia from the point of view of race. Much to the surprise of Frank's regime, Müller concluded that the local Slavs of the prehistoric period, as seen from the archaeological evidence, were a fair-haired people with elongated skulls, not the supposedly inferior *Ostmenschen*. If anything, Müller's research produced embarrassment for the Nazi regime and enthusiastic support from Czech scholars. The publication of Borkovský's book must therefore be seen against the background of the Müller episode. Despite Borkovský's caution and use of a rather technical vocabulary,

¹⁵ Ivan Borkovský, *Staroslovanská keramika v střední Evropě: Studie k počátkům slovanské kultury* (Prague, 1940), pp. 25 and 34–35. Borkovský illustrated his conclusions with finds from Prague and Bucharest. The latter were also used for his chronology of Slavic pottery, as excavations at Bucharest-Dămăroaia produced hand-made pottery associated with coins minted for Emperor Justinian (527–65). See Dinu V. Rosetti, 'Siedlungen der Kaiserzeit und der Völkerwanderungszeit bei Bukarest', *Germania*, 18 (1934), 206–13; Borkovský, *Keramika*, p. 61. Borkovský, however, interpreted the Dămăroaia finds as late developments of his Prague type. By contrast, he believed all finds from Prague to be of a much earlier date.

Lothar Zotz, the newly appointed professor at the German University in Prague, promptly denounced his book as anti-German.¹⁶

The association between Slavic studies and the rise of the Nazi ideology in Germany is even stronger in the case of the Soviet Union. Until the mid-1930s, Slavic studies were viewed as anti-Marxist and the dominant discourse about the early Slavs was that inspired by N. I. Marr.¹⁷ Marr's supporter in the discipline was N. S. Derzhavin (1877–1953), a professor at Petrograd before the Bolshevik revolution, later appointed chair of the department of Slavic languages and rector of the University of Leningrad (1922–25). He also became director of the Institute of Slavonic Studies established in Leningrad in 1931 and, in that capacity, wrote the Institute's program of studies. Derzhavin believed that the Slavs were native to the Balkans and that sources began to talk about them only after AD 500 because it was only at that time that the Slavs revolted against Roman slavery. According to Derzhavin, 'Slavs' was just a new name for the old population exploited by Roman landowners, not an ethnic label. Because of their frequent riots, the Slavs ended up being depicted as barbarians in late Roman sources.¹⁸

Derzhavin's interpretation of early Slavic history was very popular in the early years of Soviet archaeology, because he interpreted cultural and linguistic changes as the direct results of socio-economic shifts.¹⁹ But a new interpretation was abruptly put forward in the late 1930s. In 1937, Stalin published a booklet asking historians to write not simply history, but histories of the nations belonging to the USSR, of their interactions and relations to the outside world. This apparently benign requirement posed a remarkably difficult problem, for studying the nations of the USSR meant studying the process of ethnic formation and reviving the concept of ethnogenesis condemned by Marr's theories. More important, the new treatise of Soviet history, the first volumes of which were specifically written in accordance with Stalin's recommendations, were

¹⁶ Preidel, *Anfänge*, p. 57; Sklenář, *Archaeology*, pp. 162–63. For the Müller episode: Vojtech Mastny, *The Czechs under Nazi Rule: The Failure of National Resistance, 1939–1942* (New York/London, 1971), pp. 130–31. For Zotz: Arnold and Hassmann, 'Archaeology', p. 80. In Nazi Germany, Theodor Voigt applied Borkovský's theories to ceramic finds from cremation burials. See Hansjürgen Brachmann, 'Die Funde der Gruppe des Prager Typs in der DDR und ihre Stellung im Rahmen der frühslawischen Besiedlung dieses Gebietes', *SlA*, 29 (1983), 23–64 (p. 23).

¹⁷ For Marr's theories, see Gisela Bruche-Schulz, 'Marr, Marx and Linguistics in the Soviet Union', *Historiographia Linguistica*, 20 (1993), 455–72; Yuri Slezkine, 'N. Ia. Marr and the National Origins of Soviet Ethnogenetics', *Slavic Review*, 55 (1996), 826–62.

¹⁸ M. Iu. Braichevskii, 'Problema slaviano-vizantiiskikh otnoshenii do IX veka v sovetskoi literature poslednikh let', *Vizantiiskii vremennik*, 22 (1962), 80–99 (p. 81). For Slavic studies in the 1920s and early 1930s, see A. N. Goriainov, 'Slavianovedy - zhertvy repressii 1920–1940-kh godov: nekotorye neizvestnye stranitsy iz istorii sovetskoi nauki', *SovS*, 2 (1990), 78–89.

¹⁹ See Slawoj Szykiewicz, 'Mythologized Representations in Soviet Thinking on the Nationalities Problem', *Anthropology Today*, 6 (1990), 2–5 (p. 3); Timothy Taylor, 'Conversations with Leo Klejn', *CAnth*, 34 (1993), 723–35 (p. 725); Shnirelman, 'Internationalism', p. 122.

expected to emphasize that the Slavs were natives to eastern Europe. This was meant to counter German claims linking the origins of the Goths to territories now under Soviet control.²⁰

The first formal reference to the need to study the Slavic ethnogenesis was by Aleksandr D. Udal'tsov at a meeting at the Academy of Sciences in September 1938. In his paper, Udal'tsov paid lip service to Marr and castigated the errors of fascist theories. But the most controversial paper of the meeting was that of Aleksandr V. Mishulin on early Byzantine sources concerning the early Slavs. Mishulin boldly spoke of the Slavic *migration* to the Balkans. In reply, Derzhavin argued that the Slavs lived since time immemorial in the Balkans and that Mishulin had taken his early Byzantine sources at their face value, without understanding their true meaning. According to Derzhavin, Marr's theory could better explain Mishulin's evidence. During the 500s, the Slavs (i.e. the native inhabitants of the Balkans) had reached a level of development that, according to the laws of historical materialism, required their separation from the empire. Their struggle for independence was therefore depicted by Byzantine sources as a barbarian invasion, but this bias only indicated that the Slavs were viewed as a serious threat to the power of Roman landowners.²¹

Derzhavin's paper did not remain without response. Mikhail I. Artamonov, though carefully citing long passages from Marr's works, argued in favor of population movements. He embraced Šafārik's and Niederle's ideas and spoke of Scythians as ancestors of the Slavs. Artamonov believed that language was the crucial aspect of ethnicity, and

²⁰ New interpretation: Iosif V. Stalin, Andrei A. Zhdanov, and Sergei M. Kirov, *K izucheniiu istorii: Sbornik* (Moscow, 1937). See also Stephen Velychenko, 'The Origins of the Official Soviet Interpretation of Eastern Slavic History: A Case Study of Policy Formulation', in *Beiträge zur 6. Internationalen Konferenz zur altrussischen Geschichte, Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte*, 46 (Wiesbaden, 1992), p. 231; Elena P. Aksenova and Mikhail A. Vasil'ev, 'Problemy etnogonii slavianstva i ego vetvei v akademicheskikh diskussiakh rubezha 1930–1940-kh godov', *SovS*, 2 (1993), 86–104 (p. 86). Soviet Slavs versus Nazi Goths: V. D. Koroliuk, 'K issledovaniia v oblasti etnogeneza slavian i vostochnykh romantsev', in *Voprosy*, p. 7. The rehabilitation of the concept of national history coincided with the Soviet-Finnish war. See Viktor A. Shnirel'man, 'Zlokliucheniia odnoi nauki: Etnogeneticheskie issledovaniia i stalinskaja natsional'naia politika', *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, 3 (1993), 52–68 (p. 59) (for the Finnish equivalent, see Fewster in this volume).

²¹ Aleksandr V. Mishulin, 'Drevnie slavian i sud'by Vostochnorimskoi imperii', *VDI*, 1 (1939), 290–307; Nikolai S. Derzhavin, 'Ob etnogeneze drevneishikh narodov Dneprovsko-Dunaiskogo basseina', *ibid.*, 279–89. For this meeting, see also Velychenko, 'Origins', p. 242 and Aksenova and Vasil'ev, 'Problemy', p. 88. By Marrist standards, Mishulin's academic record was impeccable, which no doubt had an important role in deflating Derzhavin's accusations. Mishulin had just published his monograph on Spartacus, in which he described the revolt of the Roman slaves as a revolutionary acme of class struggle. See Aleksandr V. Mishulin, *Spartovskoe vosstanie: Revolutsiia rabov v Rime v I veka do n.e.* (Moscow, 1936).

that linguists must have the ultimate word in the debate over Slavic ethnicity. By contrast, Iurii V. Got'e, the head of the history department at the University of Moscow and newly nominated member of the Academy, openly accused Marrist linguists of not being capable of solving the problem of how the Slavs developed from the proto-Slavs.²²

Others simply ignored Marr's teachings and boldly spoke of homelands and proto-languages.²³ At another meeting at the Academy of Sciences in April 1939, Boris A. Rybakov, at that time a recent graduate from the Lomonosov University in Moscow, presented a paper in which he claimed the Antes for Russian history. One year later, at a conference at the Institute for the History of Material Culture, Petr N. Tret'iakov, then a doctoral candidate in History at the University of Leningrad, read a paper on the ethnogenesis of the Slavs, in which, despite extensive citations from his works, Marr's theses were indirectly criticized.²⁴ Soviet historians were now rushed into the study of the early Slavs and urged to produce relevant works.

As the Soviet war propaganda was searching for means to mobilize Soviet society against the Nazi aggressor, the Slavic ethnogenesis, now the major, if not the only, research topic of Soviet archaeology and historiography, gradually turned into a symbol of national identity. While Marr's teachings were abandoned in favor of a culture-historical approach, the origins of the Slavs (i.e. Russians) were pushed even further into prehistory. Udal'tsov saw a continuous ethnic sequence running through history from the bearers of the Tripolye culture of the Neolithic, the Scythians, the Sarmatians, and the Antes, to the modern Russians. Derzhavin, despite his orthodox Marrism, went so far as to speculate on the origins of the Russians in the Upper Palaeolithic culture of the Dnieper area, while Vladimir V. Mavrodin thought it would be appropriate to begin the

²² With his two-volume *Ocherki po istorii material'noi kul'tury Vostochnoi Evropy do osnovanii pervogo russkogo gosudarstva* (Leningrad, 1925–30), Got'e was the first to use both archaeological and linguistic data for writing the history of the eastern Slavs. For Artamonov's theories, see Lev S. Klein, 'Voprosy proiskhozhdeniia slavian v sbornik dokladov VI nauchnoi konferentsii Instituta Arkheologii Akademii Nauk USSR', *SA*, 22 (1955), 257–72 (p. 271), and 'K postanovke voprosa o proiskhozhdenii slavian', in *Problemy otechestvennoi i vseobshchei istorii: Sbornik statei k 150-letiiu Leningradskogo universiteta*, ed. by V. G. Rebunienikov (Leningrad, 1969), p. 27; Braichevskii, 'Problema', p. 81; Aksenova and Vasil'ev, 'Problemy', p. 89. Being a representative of 'bourgeois science', Niederle's name was never mentioned until *Slovanské starož itnosti* was translated into Russian in 1956.

²³ Mitrofan V. Levchenko, 'Vizantiia i slaviane v VI–VII vv.', *VDI*, 4 (1938), 23–48; Boris T. Gorianov, 'Slavianske poseleniia VI v ikh obshchestvennyi stroi', *ibid.*, 308–18, and 'Slaviane i Vizantiia v V–VI vv. nashei ery', *IZ*, 10 (1939), 101–10.

²⁴ Boris A. Rybakov, 'Anty i Kievskaiia Rus', *VDI*, 1 (1939), 319–37. For Tret'iakov's paper, which remained unpublished, see Aksenova and Vasil'ev, 'Problemy', pp. 98–99. Rybakov's career: Joachim Hösler, *Die sowjetische Geschichtswissenschaft 1953 bis 1991: Studien zur Methodologie- und Organisationsgeschichte* (Munich, 1995), p. 25–26.

history of the Slavs with Neanderthal Man.²⁵ Soviet archaeologists unanimously embraced Niederle's influential suggestion that the Slavic *Urheimat* was located along the upper Dnieper river. However, as the Red Army was launching a massive offensive along the Vistula, reaching the heart of the Third Reich, Soviet scholars favored the idea of an enormous Slavic homeland stretching from the Oka and the Volga to the Elbe and the Saale, and from the Aegean and Black seas to the Baltic.²⁶ Soviet archaeologists and historians now discovered that the ancestors of the Slavs were the Thracians and the Illyrians. Many accepted Derzhavin's idea that the Slavs had lived in the Balkans since time immemorial. Others, more prone to reinterpreting history in the light of recent Soviet conquests in Eastern Europe, argued that the Slavs came to the Balkans to assist the exploited masses in their struggle against Roman imperialism.²⁷ The Slavs were now natives to the Baltic republics (newly reincorporated into the USSR), and, soon after the deportation of the Tatars in 1944, to Crimea. The only apparent problem was that of finding the 'missing link' between Scythians and Kievan Rus'. Rybakov, now a professor of history at the University of Moscow, quickly appointed chair of the history department (1950), provost (1952), corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences (1953), and director of the Archaeological Institute (1956), offered an easy solution. In the years of nationalist propaganda during the war, he published a seven-page article in which he attributed to the Slavs both Spitsyn's 'Antian antiquities' and the remains excavated by Khvoika at Chernyakhov. Rybakov's argument was that the archaeological distribution of both coincided with Jordanes's description of the territory inhabited by the Antes.²⁸ The association between the Slavs and the Chernyakhov culture was enthusiastically advocated after the war by Soviet archaeologists, even after Artamonov revised his previous views and argued, in 1955, that the Chernyakhov culture represented a coalition of ethnic groups under the leadership of the Goths.²⁹

²⁵ Aleksandr D. Udal'tsov, 'Nachal'nyi period vostochnoslavianskogo etnogeneza', *Iz*, 11–12 (1943), 67–72; Nikolai S. Derzhavin, *Proiskhozhdenie russkogo naroda* (Moscow, 1944), pp. 3–4; Vladimir V. Mavrodin, *Obrazovanie drevnerusskogo gosudarstva* (Leningrad, 1945), p. 15. See also Viktor A. Shnirel'man, 'Natsionalisticheskii mif: osnovnye kharakteristiki (na primere etnogeneticheskikh versii vostochnoslavianskikh narodov)', *SovS*, 6 (1995), 3–13.

²⁶ The first to speak of this 'Slavic realm' was again Derzhavin (*Proiskhozhdenie*, p. 46).

²⁷ Some explained the migration itself by the need for the Slavs to fight back Roman expansionism. See, e.g., *Istoriia Bolgarii*, ed. by P. N. Tret'iakov (Moscow, 1954), pp. 38–39. For an early critique of this approach, see Vasilka Tăpkova-Zaimova, 'Sur les rapports entre la population indigène des régions balkaniques et les "barbares" au VI^e–VII^e siècles', *Byzantinobulgarica*, 1 (1962), 67–78 (pp. 68 and 70).

²⁸ Boris A. Rybakov, 'Ranniaia kul'tura vostochnykh slavian', *Iz*, 11–12 (1943), 73–80.

²⁹ See Klein, 'Voprosy', p. 258; G. F. Korzukhina, 'K istorii srednego Podneprov'ia v seređine I tysiaçetiiia n.e.', *SA*, 2 (1955), 61–82 (p. 69). Slavs and Chernyakhov: Ivan I. Liapushkin, 'Nekotorye voprosy iz predystorii vostochnykh slavian', *KSIa*, 100 (1965), 116–25 (p. 121); Mark B. Shchukin, 'Nekotorye problemy khronologii cherniakhovskoi kul'tury i istorii

The 1950s witnessed massive state investments in archaeology. With the unearthing of the first remains of sixth- and seventh-century settlements in Ukraine, the idea of the Chernyakhov culture as primarily Slavic simply died out.³⁰ Following Sergei S. Gamchenko's excavations in Volhynia (1896–1923), large-scale horizontal excavations of settlements and cemeteries were carried out by a younger generation of archaeologists.³¹ In most cases, this resulted in the total excavation of sixth- to seventh-century villages.³² Iurii V. Kukharenko called the hand-made pottery found in these settlements

slavian', in *Rapports du III^e Congrès international d'archéologie slave, Bratislava, 7–14 septembre 1975*, ed. by Bohuslav Chropovský (Bratislava, 1980), p. 399; Baran, Gorokhovskii, and Magomedov, 'Cherniakhovskaia kul'tura', p. 35–36. Such theories were still popular in the 1970s. See Valentin V. Sedov, 'Formirovanie slavianskogo naseleniia srednego Podneprov'ia', *SA*, 4 (1972), 116–30. In a recent book, Pavel Dolukhanov, *The Early Slavs: Eastern Europe from the Initial Settlement to the Kievan Rus* (London, 1996), p. 158, speaks of 'indisputable archaeological evidence proving that the peoples who made up the bulk of the agricultural population of the east Gothic "state" were Slavs'.

³⁰ Shchukin, 'Nekotorye problemy', p. 399, but see Valentin V. Sedov, *Vostochnye slaviane v VI–XIII vv.* (Moscow, 1982), pp. 27–28.

³¹ The results of Gamchenko's excavations remained unpublished until 1963. See V. P. Petrov, 'Pamiatniki Korchaskogo tipa (po materialam raskopok S. S. Gamchenko)', in *Slaviane nakanune obrazovaniia Kievskoi Rusi*, ed. by Boris A. Rybakov (Moscow, 1963), pp. 16–38. Excavations in Volhynia: Irina P. Rusanova, *Slavianskie drevnosti VI–VII vv. Kul'tura prazhskogo tipa* (Moscow, 1976), pp. 12–13; Vladimir D. Baran, 'Prazhskaia kul'tura', in *Etnokul'turnaia karta territorii Ukrainskoi SSR v I tys. n.e.*, ed. by V. D. Baran, R. V. Terpilovskii, and E. V. Maksimov (Kiev, 1990), pp. 59–60, and 'Prazhskaia kul'tura', in *Arkheologiia Prikarpat'ia, Volyni i Zakarpat'ia (ranneslavianskii i drevnerusskii periody)*, ed. by V. V. Aulikh, R. S. Bagrii, and V. D. Baran (Kiev, 1990), pp. 59–60; Oleg M. Prikhodniuk, 'Ranneslavianskie kul'tury V–VII vv. I etnopoliticheskaia konsolidatsiia slavian. Istoriografiia', in *Slaviane iugo-vostochnoi Evropy v predgosudarstvennoi period*, ed. by V. D. Baran, E. V. Maksimov, and B. V. Magomedov (Kiev, 1990), p. 202. Between 1956 and 1964, Iurii V. Kukharenko excavated the settlement at Babka, near Roven', and the burial mounds at Miropol', where Gamchenko had already worked in the 1890s. V. V. Aulikh and Iurii N. Zakharuk started excavations on the important site at Zimno, in western Ukraine, while Volodymyr Baran and V. V. Aulikh began working at Ripnev. The 1950s also witnessed large-scale excavations on several sites in Moldova, all led by Georgii B. Fedorov. During the 1960s and 1970s, the center of archaeological activities shifted from Polesie to the basins of the Upper Dniester and Upper Prut rivers, near the Ukrainian-Romanian border. Baran excavated the settlements at Bobshev, Dem'iany, and Zelenyi Gai, while Galina I. Smirnova was working at Nezvisko, and Sonia P. Pachkova at Gorosheva. At the same time, Baran opened excavations at Rashkov, Irina P. Rusanova and Boris O. Timoshchuk at Kodyn, and L. V. Vakulenko at Glubokaia.

³² See, e.g., Irina P. Rusanova and Boris O. Timoshchuk, *Kodyn, slavianskie poseleniia V–VIII vv. na r. Prut* (Moscow, 1984); L. V. Vakulenko and O. M. Prikhodniuk, *Slavianskie*

the 'Zhitomir type', which he viewed as a local variant of the Prague type established by Borkovský in 1940.³³ He later abandoned the idea of a variant in favor of a single Prague type characterizing all Slavic cultures between the Elbe and the Dnieper rivers.³⁴ V. P. Petrov, however, argued that since the pottery Gamchenko had found at Korchak, near Zhitomir, derived from the local pottery of the early Iron Age, the Zhitomir-Korchak type antedated Borkovský's Prague type. As a consequence, the earliest Slavic pottery was that of Ukraine, not that of Czechoslovakia.³⁵ Irina P. Rusanova first applied statistical methods to the identification of pottery types. Her conclusion was that vessels of certain proportions made up what she called the Prague-Korchak type.³⁶ To Rusanova, this type was a sort of symbol, the main and only indicator of Slavic ethnicity in material culture terms.³⁷ In contrast, Valentin V. Sedov spoke of two types of Slavic

poseleniia I tys. n.e. u s. Sokol na Srednem Dnestre (Kiev, 1984); Vladimir D. Baran, *Prazhskaia kul'tura Podnestrov'ia po materialam poselenii u s. Rashkov* (Kiev, 1988).

³³ Iurii V. Kukharenko, 'Slavianskie drevnosti V–IX vekov na territorii Pripiatskogo Poles'ia', *KSIA*, 57 (1955), 33–38 (pp. 36–38), and Irina P. Rusanova, 'Arkheologicheskie pamiatniki vtoroi poloviny I tysiacheletii n.e. na territorii drevlian', *SA*, 4 (1958), 33–46 and eadem, 'Karta raspostraneniia pamiatnikov tipa Korchak (VI–VII vv. n.e.)', in *Drevnie slaviani i ikh sosedi*, ed. by Iurii V. Kukharenko (Moscow, 1970), p. 93. At the same time, efforts were made to demonstrate that the Dacians were the ancestors of the Slavs, a reading of history which nicely dovetailed with the official claims that all inhabitants of Soviet Moldova had Slavic-speaking ancestors; see Georgii B. Fedorov, 'Drevnie slaviane v Moldavii', *Izvestiia Moldavskogo filiala Akademii nauk SSSR*, 25 (1955), 73–83 (p. 75); Oleg M. Prikhodniuk, 'K voprosu o prisutstvii antov v Karpato-Dunaiskikh zemliakh', in *Slaviane na Dnestre i Dunae: Sbornik nauchnykh trudov*, ed. by V. D. Baran, R. V. Terpilovskii, and A. T. Smilenko (Kiev, 1983), p. 186.

³⁴ Iurii V. Kukharenko, 'Pamiatniki prazhskego tipa na territorii Pridneprov'ia', *SLA*, 7 (1960), 111–24 (p. 112).

³⁵ Petrov, 'Pamiatniki', p. 38. Similar claim for Belarus: Leonid D. Pobol', 'Rannesrednevekovye drevnosti Belorussii (VI–IX vv. n.e.)', in *Berichte über den II. Internationalen Kongreß für slawische Archäologie, Berlin, 24.–28. August 1970*, ed. by Joachim Herrman and Karl-Heinz Otto (Berlin, 1973), III, 491–500. For an early critique of this approach, see Josip Korošec, 'Pravilnost opredeljevanja posamežnih predmetov i kultur zgodnjega srednjega veka do 7. stolječa kot slovanskih', *Zgodovinski Casopis*, 12–13 (1958–59), 75–109 (p. 100).

³⁶ Rusanova, *Drevnosti*, p. 123, and eadem, 'Klassifikatsiia keramiki tipa Korchak', *SLA*, 30 (1984–87), 93–100 (p. 94). Despite her emphasis on pottery as the defining element of the early Slavic culture, Rusanova recognized that vessels of the same type often appeared in much later periods. She also observed that not all vessels found by Gamchenko were of the sixth or seventh century. In fact, many were most probably prehistoric specimens. See Irina P. Rusanova, 'Keramika ranneslavianskikh poselenii Zhitomirshchiny', *ArchRoz*, 20 (1968), 576–82 (p. 577).

³⁷ Irina P. Rusanova, 'O keramike rannesrednevekovykh pamiatnikov Verkhnego i Srednego Podneprov'ia', in *Slaviane i Rus'*, ed. by E. I. Krupnov and others (Moscow, 1968), p. 148.

pottery. He attributed to the Antes the newly established Pen'kovka-type, found in settlements excavated in the 1950s and 1960s.³⁸ Though still disputed,³⁹ Sedov's identification of the Pen'kovka culture with the Antes quickly gained supporters. Some began to speak of two different, though related, cultures, and then delineated on maps a 'Prague zone' — an archaeological equivalent of Jordanes's *Sclaveni* — and a 'Pen'kovka zone' representing the Antes, fall-out curves neatly coinciding with the borders of the Soviet republics.⁴⁰

This new archaeological discourse coincides in time with a significant change in Soviet ethnography, associated with the name and work of Julian Bromley. Following Stalin's condemnation of Marrism as 'vulgar Marxism,' the tendency was now to treat ethnic identity as a self-evident aspect of ethnicity, though, like all other forms of consciousness, ethnic identity was still viewed as a derivative of objective factors.⁴¹ To Bromley, ethnicity was based on a stable core, called *ethnos* or *ethnikos*, which persisted through all social formations, despite being affected by the prevailing economic and social environment of any formation. He endeavored to find a place for ethnicity among specifically *cultural* phenomena, as opposed to social structure. To Bromley, ethnic

According to Rusanova, the Prague-Korchak pottery was Slavic because its distribution coincided with that of rivers with early Slavic names.

³⁸ Valentin V. Sedov, *Slaviane verkhnego Podneprov'ia i Podvin'ia* (Moscow, 1970), *Proiskhozhdenie i ranniia istoriia slavian* (Moscow, 1979), idem, 'Anty', in *Etmosotsial'naia i politicheskaiia struktura rannefeodal'nykh slavianskikh gosudarstv i narodnostei*, ed. by Gennadii G. Litavrin (Moscow, 1987), pp. 16–22, and idem, 'Problema proiskhozhdeniia i nachal'noi istorii slavian', *Slaviano-russkie drevnosti*, 1 (1988), 7–21 (p. 11). See also Oleg M. Prikhodniuk, 'Pen'kovskaia kul'tura', in *Etnokul'turnaia karta*, p. 85, and 'Anty i pen'kovskaia kul'tura', in *Drevnie slaviane i Kievskaiia Rus'*, ed. by P. P. Tolochko (Kiev, 1989), p. 60. Like Rybakov, Prikhodniuk linked the Pen'kovka culture to Spitsyn's 'Antian antiquities.'

³⁹ See Csanád Bálint, *Die Archäologie der Steppe: Steppenvölker zwischen Volga und Donau vom 6. bis zum 10. Jahrhundert* (Vienna/Cologne, 1989), pp. 84–85.

⁴⁰ Georgii B. Fedorov, *Naselenie Prutsko-Dnestrovskogo mezhdurech'ia v I tysiacheletii n.e.*, *Materialy i issledovaniia po arkheologii SSSR*, 89 (Moscow, 1960), p. 190; and 'Naselenie Iugo-Zapada SSSR v I-nachale II tysiacheletiiia nashei ery', *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, 2 (1961), 81–106 (p. 90); Isak A. Rafalovich, 'Moldaviia i puti rasselenia slavian v iugo-vostochnoi Evrope', in *Iugo-vostochnaia Evropa v srednie veka*, ed. by Iakim S. Grosul (Kishinev, 1972), pp. 23–24; Prikhodniuk, 'Anty', pp. 60–61; Baran, 'Entstehung', p. 33. For an attempt to identify the tribes of the *Russian Primary Chronicle* with sixth- and seventh-century archaeological cultures, see Alla T. Smilenko, 'O kharakternykh chertakh kul'tury vostochnykh slavian VI–IX vekov', in *Rapports*, pp. 757–65.

⁴¹ Julian Bromley and Viktor Kozlov, 'The Theory of Ethnos and Ethnic Processes in Soviet Social Sciences', *CSSH*, 31 (1989), 425–38 (p. 427). See also Ernest Gellner, *State and Society in Soviet Thought* (Oxford/New York, 1988), p. 135.

specificity was the objective justification of subjective awareness of affiliation to a given *ethnos*.⁴² Despite considerable divergence over what exactly constituted the 'objective factors' of ethnicity (language, culture, territory, common origin, etc.), Bromley and other Soviet ethnographers ostensibly viewed ethnicity as neither eternal nor genetic, but as socially real and presumably not as a mystified expression of something else. Most Soviet scholars of the 1960s and 1970s endorsed the idea that ethnicity was a culturally self-reproducing set of behavioral patterns linked to collective self-identity, which continued through different modes of production.⁴³ Issues of ethnic continuity and discontinuity were thus given theoretical and empirical attention as ethnic-related patterns of collective behavior. Ethnohistory became a major field of study, and ethnogenesis, the process by which ethnic identity is formed, replaced social formation as the main focus of research. This new concept of ethnicity was closely tied into the ideology of ethno-nationalism, through which ethnic groups legitimated their borders and status by forming administrative units and republics.⁴⁴ By claiming that ethnicities, once formed through ethnogeneses, remained essentially unchanged through history, Soviet ethnographers thus suggested that ethnic groups were formulated in a social and political vacuum. Ethnicity, therefore, was a given, which required description, not explanation.

Soviet archaeologists immediately endorsed this new concept of ethnicity. Bromley's ideas made a great impression upon them.⁴⁵ On the basis of this alliance with the theory of *ethnos*, archaeology now became the 'science about ethnogenesis'.⁴⁶ As a consequence, the interest soon shifted from identifying the archaeological culture of the historically attested Slavs to a search for the *origins* of that culture. Rybakov dismissed the retrogressive method altogether and simply argued that the beginnings of Slavic history ought to be dated around 1400 BC, as the first Bronze Age cultures emerged in

⁴² Iulian V. Bromlei, *Etnos i etnografiia* (Moscow, 1973), and idem, *Ocherki teorii etnosa* (Moscow, 1983). See also Tamara Dragadze, 'The Place of "Ethnos" Theory in Soviet Anthropology', in *Soviet and Western Anthropology*, ed. by Ernest Gellner (New York, 1980), p. 164.

⁴³ See Teodor Shanin, 'Ethnicity in the Soviet Union: Analytical Perceptions and Political Strategies', *CSSH*, 31 (1989), 409–23 (p. 413).

⁴⁴ Valery A. Tishkov, 'Inventions and Manifestations of Ethno-nationalism in Soviet Academic and Public Discourse', in *Assessing Cultural Anthropology*, ed. by R. Borofsky, B. Dobson, and M. Jarrett (New York, 1994), p. 444.

⁴⁵ Leo S. Klejn, 'Panorama of Theoretical Archaeology', *CAnth*, 18 (1977), 1–42 (p. 29). Rusanova, while citing Bromlei's books and articles, argued at length that since there is no known case of two ethnic groups (*naroda*) sharing the same culture, it is worth trying to identify the Slavs by archaeological means. See Irina P. Rusanova, 'Vvedenie', in *Slaviane i ikh sosedi v kontse I tysiacheletiiia do n.e.-pervoi polovine I tysiacheletiiia n.e.*, ed. by I. P. Rusanova and E. A. Symonovich (Moscow, 1993), p. 5.

⁴⁶ Klein, *Fenomen*, p. 43.

the region between the Oder and the Dnieper rivers, the *Urheimat* of the Slavs.⁴⁷ Tret'iakov, chief editor of *Voprosy istorii* (1950–53) and director of the Institute of Slavic Studies, first linked the Prague type to the Zarubинets and Kiev cultures of a much earlier date.⁴⁸ Sedov suggested that the ethnic and linguistic community of the first century BC to the first century AD, represented by the Przeworsk culture of the Vistula basin, was that of Tacitus's Venedi. They began to move into the Upper Dniester valley during the first and second centuries. By AD 300, as the Chernyakhov culture emerged in western and central Ukraine, the Venedi formed the majority of the population in the area. As bearers of the Przeworsk culture, they assimilated all neighboring cultures, such as Zarubинets and Kiev. During the fourth century, the Antes gradually separated themselves from the Przeworsk block, followed by the Sclavenes, a century or two later. The new ethnic groups were bearers of the Pen'kovka and Prague-Korchak cultures, respectively. Sedov's theory was used by others to push the Slavic ethnogenesis back in time, to the 'Proto-Slavo-Balts' of the early Iron Age, thus 'adjusting' the results of linguistic research to archaeological theories.⁴⁹

In contrast, Volodymyr D. Baran has recently argued that the typical feature of the early Slavic culture is not pottery, but the sunken building (*Grubenhaus*). Since such

⁴⁷ Boris A. Rybakov, *Iazychestvo drevnikh slavian* (Moscow, 1981), pp. 214–30; Valentin V. Sedov, 'Problema etnogeneza slavian v arkheologicheskoi literature 1979–1985 gg.', *KSLA*, 195 (1989), 3–9 (p. 8). For Rybakov, see Anatolii P. Novosel'tsev, 'Mir istorii' ili mif istorii?' *Voprosy istorii*, 1 (1993), 23–31.

⁴⁸ Petr N. Tret'iakov, *U istokov drevnerusskoi narodnosti* (Leningrad, 1970), and idem, *Posledam drevnikh slavianskikh plemen* (Leningrad, 1982). See also the collections of studies edited by Tret'iakov, *Pamiatniki zarubинetskoii kul'tury* (Moscow, 1959) and *Novye dannye o zarubинetskoii kul'ture v Podneprov'e* (Moscow, 1969). See also Sedov, 'Rannii period', p. 74. For Zarubинets, Kiev, and other related archaeological cultures of the first centuries AD, see *Slaviane iugo-vostochnoi Evropy*, pp. 10–97. For the Kiev culture, see also E. V. Maksimov and R. V. Terpilovskii, 'Kievskaiia kul'tura', in *Slaviane i ikh sosedi*, pp. 106–22. Others maintained that the Kiev culture participated only in the forming of the Kolochin culture, with only an indirect influence on the Prague culture; see Sedov, *Vostochnyi slaviane*, p. 33; R. V. Terpilovskii, 'The Slavs of the Dnieper Basin in the Migration Period', in *Medieval Europe 1992. Death and Burial* (York, 1992), IV, 162. See also Oleg M. Prikhodniuk, 'O territorii formirovaniia o osnovnykh napravleniakh rasprostraneniia Pen'kovskoi kul'tury', in *Drevnosti Iugo-Zapada SSSR*, ed. by P. P. Byrnia and others (Kishinev, 1991), pp. 113–23.

⁴⁹ Sedov, *Proiskhozhdenie*, and idem, 'Sovremennoe sostoiianie problemy etnogeneza slavian', *SLA*, 37 (1996), 21–40. See also Gleb S. Lebedev, 'Arkheologo-lingvisticheskaia gipoteza slavianskogo etnogeneza', in *Slaviane: Etnogeneza i etnicheskaia istoriia (Mezhdistitsiplinarnye issledovaniia)*, ed. by A. S. Gerd and G. S. Lebedev (Leningrad, 1989), pp. 105–15. As Horace G. Lunt, 'Notes on Nationalist Attitudes in Slavic Studies', *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 34 (1992), 459–70 (p. 468), wittily remarked, the impression one gets from recent accounts on this matter is that one remote generation that spoke Indo-European produced children who spoke Slavic.

buildings already existed at the time of the Chernyakhov culture, Baran revived the idea of a Chernyakhov origin of the early Slavic culture.⁵⁰ According to him, the Slavs were part of the Gothic confederation archaeologically identifiable as the Chernyakhov culture. They managed to survive under Hunnic rule and emerged as an independent political force by the end of the fifth century. A Chernyakhov origin was also claimed for the Pen'kovka culture.⁵¹ Baran's ideas, however, were disputed by other archaeologists, in particular by Mark Shchukin, who, on the basis of a thorough application of the retrogressive method, pointed to a substantial chronological gap between the latest Chernyakhov remains and the earliest Prague-type materials.⁵² Shchukin mapped all third- to fifth-century finds from Eastern Europe and observed that the distribution revealed a large 'white spot' in the Pripet basin. There, he contended, was the homeland of the Slavs.⁵³ Shchukin's theory was also accepted by linguists, who still speak of the Slavs as 'the sons and the products of the marsh'.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Volodymyr D. Baran, 'Slov'ians'ky rann'oseredn'ovichny kultury ta ikhny pidosnovi', in *Starozhitnosti Rusy-Ukrainy: Zbirnyk naukovikh prats'*, ed. by P. P. Tolochko and others (Kiev, 1994), p. 8. See also Irina P. Rusanova, 'O rannei date pamiatnikov prazhskogo tipa', in *Drevniaia Rus' i slaviane*, ed. by T. V. Nikolaeva (Moscow, 1978), pp. 138–43; Sedov, 'Problema etnogeneza', p. 6. The origins of the Slavic culture were recently pushed back again to the fourth century, with a shift of emphasis to Polesie. See Aleksandr A. Egoreichenko, 'Poselenie u d. Ostrov Pinskogo r-na Brestskoi oblasti', *Archaeoslavica*, 1 (1991), 61–82.

⁵¹ Prikhodniuk, 'Pen'kovskaia kul'tura', p. 92. *Contra*: Evgenii A. Goriunov, 'Nekotorye voprosy istorii dneprovskogo lesostepnogo Levoberezh'ia v V-nachale VIII vekov', *SA*, 4 (1974), 99–112 (pp. 110–12); Evgenii A. Goriunov and Mikhail M. Kazanskii, 'Spornye voprosy izucheniia Pen'kovskoi kul'tury', *KSIA*, 164 (1981), 10–17 (pp. 15–16).

⁵² Recent studies substantiate Shchukin's conclusion, for, despite intensive research, the latest phase of the Chernyakhov culture has not been documented in eastern Volhynia, Baran's Slavic *Urheimat*. See E. L. Gorokhovskii, 'Khronologii cherniakhovskikh mogil'nikov lesostepnoi Ukrainy', in *Trudy V Mezhdunarodnogo Kongressa arkheologov-slavistov, Kiev 18–25 sentiabria 1985 g.*, ed. by V. D. Baran (Kiev, 1988), iv, 34–46.

⁵³ Shchukin, 'Nekotorye problemy', pp. 408 and 407 fig. 5, and idem, 'The Balto-Slavic Forest Direction in the Archaeological Study of the Ethnogenesis of the Slavs', *Wiadomości Archeologiczne*, 51 (1986–90), 3–30. The idea that the Slavs originated in the densely forested area of the North is not new. Its first archaeological formulation dates back to the early 1970s. See Joachim Werner, 'Zur Herkunft und Ausbreitung der Anten und Sklawenen', in *Actes du VIII^e Congrès international des sciences préhistoriques et protohistoriques, Beograd, 9–15 septembre 1971*, ed. by Grga Novak (Belgrade, 1971), pp. 243–52, and idem, 'Bemerkungen zur nordwestlichen Siedlungsgebiet der Slawen im 4.–6. Jahrhundert', in *Beiträge zur Ur- und Frühgeschichte*, vol. 1 (1981), pp. 695–701. Werner's theory was well received by Soviet archaeologists. His 1971 paper was quickly translated and published. See Joachim Werner, 'K proiskhozhdeniiu i raspostraneniui antov i sklavenov', *SA* 4 (1972), 102–15.

⁵⁴ See, e.g., Valerii M. Mokienko, 'Gde zhili pervye slaviane', in *Raznye grani edinoi nauki: Uchenye-molody slavistam*, ed. by P. A. Dimitriev and G. I. Safronov (St Petersburg, 1996), pp.

Slavic studies began as an almost exclusively linguistic and philological enterprise. The rise of the national archaeological schools shortly before and, to a greater extent, after World War II, added an enormous amount of information, but did not alter the main directions set for this discipline by its early-nineteenth-century founders. More often than not, archaeology was merely used to illustrate conclusions already drawn from the analysis of the linguistic material. The exceptional vigor of the linguistic approach originated in the fact that, after Herder, language was viewed as the quintessential aspect of ethnicity. As depositories of human experiences, languages could thus be used to identify various 'historical layers' in 'fossilized' sounds, words, or phrases. In this ahistorical approach, human life and society was viewed as a palimpsest, the proper task for historians being that of ascribing various 'fossils' to their respective ages. This may also explain why so many archaeologists working in the field of Slavic studies were eager to adopt the views of the linguists and rarely challenged them. The current discourse about the Slavic homeland has its roots in this attitude. Though the issue at stake seems to be a historical one, historians were often left the task of combing the existing evidence drawn from historical sources, so that it would fit the linguistic-archaeological model. Ironically, historians became beset by doubts about their ability to give answers, because of the considerable time dimension attributed to linguistic and archaeological artifacts. With no Tacitus at hand, archaeologists proved able to explore the origins of the Slavs far beyond the horizon of the first written sources.

Together with language, the search for a respectable antiquity for the history of the Slavs showed two principal thrusts: one relied on the interpretation of the historical sources as closely as possible to the linguistic-archaeological argument; the other located the Slavic homeland in the epicenter of the modern distribution of Slavic languages. The former began with the affirmation of trustworthiness for Jordanes's account of the Slavic Venethi, an approach which ultimately led to the claim of Tacitus's, Pliny's, and Ptolemy's Venedi for the history of the Slavs. The cornerstone of this theory is Šafářik's reading of Jordanes as an accurate description of a contemporary ethnic configuration.⁵⁵ The extraordinary continuity of Šafářik's reading of Jordanes, despite considerable revision in the last few decades of traditional views of the *Getica*, cannot be explained only in terms of ignorance or language barriers. Jordanes's Venethi have become the key argument in all constructions of the Slavic past primarily based on linguistic arguments. Like Šafářik, many would show condescension

40–57. The phrase 'sons and products of the marsh' was coined by Jan Peisker, Niederle's colleague at the Charles University in Prague. See Jan Peisker, 'The Expansion of the Slavs', in *Cambridge Medieval History*, ed. by H. M. Gwatkin and J. P. Whitney (New York/Cambridge, 1926), pp. 504–05. For archaeological research in Polesie, see Irina P. Rusanova, *Slavianskie drevnosti VI–IX vv. mezdu Dneprom i zapadnym Bugom*, Arkheologiya SSSR, E1-25 (Moscow, 1973). No settlement found in the area produced conclusive chronological evidence. Following the Chernobyl' catastrophe, it is unlikely that any other archaeological research will be conducted in the region in the near future.

⁵⁵ For a critique of this reading of Jordanes, see Curta, 'Hiding', pp. 321–40.

for Tacitus's 'mistake' of listing Venedi among groups living in Germania, but would never doubt that Jordanes's account is genuine. Archaeological research has already provided an enormous amount of evidence allegedly in support of the idea that the Venethi were Slavs. To admit that Jordanes built his image of the Slavs on the basis of earlier accounts and maps, without any concern for accurate description, would mean giving up evolutionary models created for explaining how the early Slavic culture derived from earlier archaeological cultures identified in the area in which Tacitus, Pliny, and Ptolemy apparently set their Venedi. To question the theoretical premises of this approach is perceived as denying its utility or, worse, as blunt revisionism.

The more radical the reaffirmation of Slavic antiquity becomes, the more writing about the history of the Slavs takes on the character of a mere description of the history of humans living since time immemorial in territories later inhabited by the Slavs. Pavel Dolukhanov begins his recent book on the early Slavs by observing that 'during the millennia which have left no written documents, the succeeding generations of people who lived in the vast spaces of the Russian Plain could hardly be described as belonging to any ethnic entity; they had no common name, whether it was "Slavs" or anything else'. Yet, like Derzhavin and Mavrodin in the 1940s, Dolukhanov believes that 'the origins and early development of peoples known as Slavs could be rightly understood only if viewed from a wide temporal perspective'. This, in his description of Slavic history, means that the proper beginning is the Palaeolithic.⁵⁶

To contemporary eyes, the academic discourse about Slavs in Eastern Europe appears as strikingly tied more to political than intellectual considerations. This may well be a consequence of the romanticized concept of ethnic identity, which is viewed as rooted in the ineffable, coercive powers of primordial attachments. But the archaeological authoritative discourse was also established on the basis of a specific concept of culture. This concept carried many assumptions, which were central to nineteenth-century classifications of human groups, in particular, an overriding concern with holism, homogeneity, and boundedness. In Soviet Russia, where the discipline of Slavic archaeology began as a propaganda response to Nazi ideology, archaeologists worked within a theoretical framework that would have been easily recognizable to Gustaf Kossinna and which would have been amenable to the *Siedlungsarchäologie* developed in Nazi Germany on the basis of his theories. Like Kossinna, Soviet archaeologists were guided by the same fundamental principle: 'sharply defined archaeological culture areas correspond unquestionably with the areas of particular peoples or tribes.' In Eastern Europe, archaeological culture is still defined in monothetic terms on the basis of the presence or absence of a list of traits or types either derived from assemblages and typical sites, or intuitively considered the most appropriate attributes in the definition of culture. Archaeologists thus regard archaeological cultures as actors on the historical stage, playing the role individuals or groups have in documentary history. Plotted on maps, archaeological cultures become ethnic groups, ready to be used for legitimizing claims of modern nation states to territory and influence.

⁵⁶ Dolukhanov, *Early Slavs*, pp. ix–x.

SECTION III

Ethnicity, Theory, and Tradition: A Response

WALTER POHL

Rarely has a 40-year-old book received as much critical debate as Reinhard Wenskus's *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* in the present volume.¹ Wenskus's model of ethnicity assumed that a small *Traditionskern*, a nucleus of tradition (not necessarily a royal family), transmits and propagates ethnic traditions which have the potential of conferring identity on a much larger population. *Stammesbildung*, termed 'ethnogenesis' by later scholars, is the process in which people of quite heterogeneous backgrounds are drawn into a new ethnic community and come to be convinced by such ancient and orally transmitted traditions that they share a common origin and should therefore live according to certain models and norms (called *Verfassung*, 'constitution', by Wenskus). This model made possible the overthrow of the deeply entrenched paradigm that ethnicity was essentially biological and immutable, and permitted the development of a more dynamic understanding of ethnic processes in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. It was then taken over and modified by different scholars;² the

¹ Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*. I would like to thank Patrick Geary, Barbara Rosenwein, Ian Wood, Herwig Wolfram, Mayke de Jong, Andrew Gillett, and Helmut Reimitz for comments and criticisms.

² The *Nationes* group (initially Beumann, Schlesinger, and others; Ehlers, Moraw, and Schneidmüller later moved to less traditional positions) published several volumes under the series title '*Nationes*', and specifically dealt with the high medieval origins of France and Germany. In Spain, Luis A. García Moreno and his school have taken a traditional stance with some nationalist undertones. For Italy, see Stefano Gasparri, *Prima delle nazioni: popoli, etnie e regni fra Antichità e Medioevo* (Roma, 1997). In the British debate, Herman Moisl's contributions have been rather peripheral; Ian Wood has presented some original insights.

'Vienna school', and Herwig Wolfram in particular, have played a key role in pushing the debate forward.

It is this '*Traditionskern*' of research on ethnicity in Vienna, and Herwig Wolfram in particular, that is the real aim of the critique assembled here. This debate in the US and Canada was rather slow to emerge: Wolfram's book on the Goths came out in 1979, and has been available in an English translation since 1988.³ The time lost has in recent years been compensated for with polemic fervour worthy of a Gothic onslaught.⁴ To sum up the main thrust of the 'critical approaches' presented in this volume by Walter Goffart and some of his former pupils from Toronto: it is most doubtful whether ancient traditions or orally transmitted myths had any part in shaping early medieval peoples. To assume that the Germanic past had any bearing on these peoples means sharing the ideological assumption of the Germanic character of the early medieval kingdoms first proposed by scholars such as Otto Höfler in Nazi Germany. Moreover, a possibly royal *Traditionskern* as an agent of ethnicity is a deeply elitist concept rooted in an authoritarian ideology. Part of the argument is methodological: the critics doubt that written sources can shed any light on orally transmitted myths even if they directly refer to them. The other part of the argument is clearly about political correctness and not so much about the early Middle Ages.

There is one basic problem with this critique: the 'ethnogenesis theory' attacked in some of the contributions assembled in this volume is a rather outdated model, largely based on some of the older works in the field without noting that the debate has moved on since; some of the debate seems more like a 'fiction of fact' than a real issue. Where more recent contributions have been taken into account, the main interest seems less to debate current views in their context, than to look for single statements that one could then expose as proof that the author is a die-hard, 1940s-style Germanophile. Typical of this method is how Murray picks, out of a fifty-four-page paper, a single sentence about the origin myth of the Lombards to conclude that my whole argument is based on the concepts of nineteenth-century *germanische Altertumskunde*.⁵ My argument is

³ Wolfram, *History of the Goths*; the work should be used in the revised third edition: *Die Goten*, 3rd edn.

⁴ The debate was opened by Goffart, 'Germanic Antiquity Today'.

⁵ Pohl, 'Telling the Difference', p. 58: 'The rich symbolism of the story includes references to an adoption of Wodanism, for one of Wodan's eponyms in Nordic mythology is "the long-beard," and a gender issue that seems to be reminiscent of the transition to patrilinear society.' The Lombard origin story is found in *Origo gentis Lang.* 1, and in Paul the Deacon, *Hist. Lang.*, I 7–9. At the beginning of the story, the Vinnili are led by a woman, Gambara; then they are named Longobards/Lombards by Wodan and have male leaders. One may debate whether this suggests a shift from matrilinear to patrilinear society or, rather, reflects early medieval perceptions of a distant past. Walter Goffart (in this volume, p. 35) is correct in contesting the Long-beard eponym for Wodan; it was in fact only inferred by scholars on the basis of late medieval Scandinavian texts that in turn may be based on Paul the Deacon (I am grateful to Robert

exactly the contrary of what Murray implies: instead of a strong and continuous archaic tradition shaping Lombard identity in Italy, there were ambiguities, paradox, misapprehensions, and oblivion. The whole article is intended to demonstrate how little was natural and clear about the new ethnic identities of Goths, Lombards, or Franks when they founded their kingdoms on Roman soil. They used what they could find, including ancient myths and symbols, Roman ethnography, classical mythology, and biblical history, to assert and delineate their difference. But there is no sign of a self-assured *Traditionskern* in secure possession of ancient truths. Ethnic discourse remained ambiguous, patchy, and tentative, and frequently had to be renegotiated.

Murray happily ignores all this to put me back in line; his verdict has been clear from the start. In the language of myth, Otto Höfler went out to Germany where he met a monster, Heinrich Himmler, and then he begat Reinhard Wenskus, who begot Herwig Wolfram, who begot Walter Pohl. Apart from this one, I do not at all object to a reconstruction of scientific genealogies. No doubt the study of early medieval ethnicity is one of the fields that has always been most pervaded by ideology and partisan scholarship. Florin Curta's excellent survey of the history of Slav archaeology is exactly the kind of meta-history that we need in order to monitor historiography and our own place within it. It is obscure, for instance, why a major British publisher in the higher education segment has recently decided to publish a book on the early Slavs that starts their history in the Palaeolithic.⁶ In many respects, German and Austrian historiography until well after 1945, and *germanische Altertumskunde* even more than most other disciplines, offer an even bleaker panorama of nationalistic concerns, and its history is still under-researched.⁷ For a considerable time after 1945, universities continued to be dominated by the Höflers and Brunners, whereas those whose academic careers had been interrupted by the Nazis continued, at best, to teach abroad.⁸ But what 'ethnogenesis theory' has achieved is to break away from this fatal strand of continuity. Only observers far

Nedoma, Vienna, for information on this point). But it cannot be claimed that I have suggested reminiscences of Wodanism to have been central to Lombard ethnicity in Italy. On the contrary; the following sentence runs, 'The Lombards in Italy may not have been aware in how many respects their beards were a liminal sign, paradoxically charged with its initial ambiguities.'

⁶ Pavel Dolukhanov, *The Early Slavs: Eastern Europe from the Initial Settlement to the Kievan Rus* (London, 1996); see Florin Curta's contribution above.

⁷ For an introduction, see Pohl, *Germanen*. A recent symposium at Freiburg was dedicated to the story of the discipline: *Zur Geschichte der Gleichung 'germanisch-deutsch'*, RGA Ergänzungsbände (forthcoming). Cf. the contribution by Hubert Fehr in this volume, a result of a Freiburg project to study the role of archaeology in nationalist ideology.

⁸ The long-term loss in intellectual capacity, but also in liberality and creativity, was dramatic. One case in point is Gerhart Ladner who had to leave Vienna in 1938, and taught at Toronto, UCLA, and elsewhere; I have had the great privilege to edit his memoirs: Gerhart B. Ladner, *Erinnerungen*, ed. by Herwig Wolfram and Walter Pohl (Vienna, 1994).

away in place and time can ignore that there was a change in paradigm, perhaps gradual but fundamental.⁹

'Ethnogenesis theory' has come a long way since Wenskus, to whose work, in the context of postwar German scholarship, Alexander Murray devotes a useful but biased discussion. Wenskus, he argues, is now often credited as having done away with the assertion that a people is a biological entity, but that view, after all, had already been clear for a long time. Here Murray underrates the weight of the biological argument among German-speaking scholars even after 1945 (and indeed, into my own career as a scholar, which started around 1980), and the efforts needed to overcome the long-standing views held by the *germanische Altertumskunde*. It is correct that the point that ethnicity is essentially subjective had been made before,¹⁰ but received views in the field proved remarkably tenacious. Then Murray goes on (p. 51 above): 'He [Wenskus] did not write to establish this point. He wrote to counter its implication that *Stamm* tradition had been interrupted by the political processes of the *Völkerwanderungszeit*.' Many of Wenskus's views are indeed influenced by the so-called *Neue Verfassungsgeschichte* of the 1950s ('lordship theory', as Murray quite aptly calls it) that owed some of its impulses to Otto Höfler's programmatic speech at the *Deutscher Historikertag* in 1937, in which he stressed the Germanic roots of the medieval kingdoms.¹¹ In many respects, Wenskus had moved beyond Höfler's views, but in others, he retained the basic concept that the post-Roman kingdoms had a Germanic political and ideological basis. Wenskus still worked within the paradigms of '*germanische Altertumskunde*'.

In this respect, Murray's critique of Wenskus is parallel to my own (which he brushes aside on p. 40, with an ironical remark about Wenskus's fall from grace). I have proposed four points in which I consider Wenskus's position untenable: (1) the concept of the *Stamm* indicates that these tribes were components of a German(ic) *Volk* or people, which I do not think existed in Late Antiquity or the early Middle Ages, except as a linguistic abstraction; (2) his elitist views implied in the idea of the *Traditionskern*; (3) his strong predilection for *Geistesgeschichte*, a German philosophical concept only

⁹ It is no coincidence that critics in this volume stress the Spanish reception of Wolfram's ideas. Garcia Moreno and his school make much of their use of Wolfram's work, but read him in a way rather reminiscent of the state of the art before Wolfram.

¹⁰ Murray's list of pre-Wenskus statements of subjective ethnicity, and Wenskus's own, may be supplemented with my list: Pohl, 'Tradition, Ethnogenese, und literarische Gestaltung'. To appreciate the progress made by Wenskus, it suffices to look at Ernst Schwarz, *Germanische Stammeskunde* (Heidelberg, 1956), published a few years before.

¹¹ Otto Höfler, 'Das germanische Kontinuitätsproblem', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 157 (1938), 1–26 assumed a 'jahrtausendealte Kontinuität der politischen Souveränität' of the Germans, for which there was no comparison 'weder im europäischen Osten, Südosten noch Westen' (p. 5). He saw this continuity founded in race and the 'kultische Bindung ihrer Gemeinschaftsformen' (p. 24). See my account of Höfler and the *Neue Verfassungsgeschichte*, and its critique, in Walter Pohl, 'Herrschaft', in *RGA* XIV (1999), pp. 443–57.

vaguely rendered in English by 'history of ideas', which allowed a subjective definition of ethnicity, but implied that the ideology of *Gentilismus* was an almost metaphysical force of change; and (4) the schematic dichotomy of Roman and Germanic, and the almost exclusively Germanic interpretation of the history of *Stammesbildung*.¹² It was precisely Herwig Wolfram who underlined the Roman foundations of the Gothic kingdoms, contrary to the views held by Höfler, Schlesinger, and Wenskus. Patrick Geary's 'mantra' that 'the Germanic world was perhaps the greatest and most enduring creation of Roman political and military genius' sketches a new paradigm that is contrary to all that Höfler ever believed.¹³ When Goths or Franks entered Roman provinces, they came from groups that had long lived in the neighbourhood of the empire (as Walter Goffart, p. 30 above, correctly stresses), and the experience had changed these societies (the *Life of St. Saba* sheds some light on the conflicts involved¹⁴). Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Vandals, Burgundians, and Franks founded their kingdoms on Roman territory at least a generation after entering it.¹⁵ The work of the authors under fire in this volume has contributed considerably to refuting Höfler's '*staatsbildende Kraft*' ('state-building force') of the Germans. These were post-Roman kingdoms founded by Roman federate armies of largely barbarian origin.

The collapse or decline of the Gothic or Frankish communities outside the empire, the often turbulent years after they had entered the empire, and their establishment as a ruling force in imperial heartlands also led to considerable changes in their composition, as Wolfram's detailed analysis has shown for the Goths, and as Kulikowski's study in this volume also acknowledges. The extent of ethnic reshuffling surely varied in each case, and can reasonably be debated. For the Ostrogoths, alternative views range from Peter Heather's assertion that many thousands of Goths formed a stable core of Gothiness (a position Kulikowski calls 'neo-Romantic revisionism') to Patrick Amory's contention that under Theoderic, Gothic identity had become mere ideology, an 'evanescent construct' (Kulikowski, pp. 72–74 above). I regard both contributions as debatable, but not quite convincing; they have the merit of testing an alternative to 'ethnogenesis' models in a thorough way.

In this volume, two further answers can be found. Murray insists on 'banal, unambiguous, and conventional ethnic association': 'a person was a Frank, a Roman, or a Burgundian by birth' (pp. 58–59). This is not particularly helpful because it does not

¹² I have already published this critique in my 1994 article, Pohl, 'Tradition, Ethnogenese, und literarische Gestaltung'. For a fuller discussion, see my *Le origini etniche dell'Europa* (Rome, 2000). Unfortunately, it has not appeared in English yet.

¹³ Geary, *Before France and Germany*, p. iv; Murray, above, p. 45, n. 24, finds its meaning 'not obvious' because it undermines his argument.

¹⁴ E. A. Thompson, *The Visigoths in the Time of Ulfila* (Oxford, 1966).

¹⁵ The Visigoths from 376 to 418; the Vandals from c. 400 to 429/39; the Ostrogoths from 454 to 493; dating is more difficult in the case of the Franks, but they were well established in Gaul when Clovis started to build his kingdom.

account for changes or ambiguities in ethnic affiliation, although Murray allows for such changes in principle; his view comes close to 'neo-Romantic revisionism'. A second position is implicit in many statements, and is consistently argued by Michael Kulikowski: we cannot get behind the words of our sources to discover what barbarian collectives were really like (p. 74). I will return to this argument below; Kulikowski avoids following his epistemological scepticism to its fatal consequences (that we can only study texts as texts, and have no access at all to past realities) by acknowledging that 'we *can* study barbarian activity' (p. 74). This, indeed, is an important methodological tool; we know enough about a wide range of barbarian activities that comparison can yield some general ideas about their options and potential as they entered the Roman world. We do not have to rely on perceptions alone. The reconstruction of events may have its limits, but still provides sufficient material to test the coherence of ethnic groups under a wide variety of circumstances.

The new peoples that gradually established themselves on Roman soil carried old names. All of them had been known since the third century; some are attested from the first century AD (Langobardi, Rugi, Burgundiones), a number in slightly different form (Gothi-Gutones, Vandali-Vandili). This takes us to the most contentious issue debated here. Most scholars agree today that these names do not simply identify coherent, wandering peoples which, for instance, left Scandinavia around the turn of our era to settle in Italy in the fifth or sixth century. The question is what else this continuity of names means. Very different groups appear as Goths in late antique sources: pirates and seafarers in the Black Sea in the third century; steppe riders or, at the same time, peaceful peasants north of the lower Danube; Roman federate units after 376; groups of privileged officers at the Byzantine court; or a class of wealthy landowners in Visigothic Spain. 'Gothic' migrations could take very different form: the gradual shift of a settlement area; mass flight after the Hun invasion;¹⁶ occasional migration of individuals or small groups along established routes (for instance, to Byzantium); organized marches of federate troops; the movement of large heterogeneous groups of warriors followed by families and dependents; or the expansion of a post-Roman kingdom. Lines on a map, one of Walter Goffart's favourite subjects, do not give an adequate impression of these successive events which do not constitute a single 'Gothic migration', but could only be turned into a linear narrative afterwards (I do agree with Goffart on this point).

Why were all these different groups called Goths? A possible answer is that the name was mainly given by the Romans to a heterogeneous group of barbarians who shared certain fundamental traits but otherwise had little in common. This seems to be

¹⁶ Michael Kulikowski (p. 76, n. 20 above) thinks that to picture the Goths of 376 as refugees is too much influenced by experiences of modern wars, and that the impact of the Huns cannot have been on a similar scale. But the images of mass migration come from Amm. Marc. XXXI 4, and other contemporary authors. They may be exaggerated, but we should not belittle the amount of violence, panic, and existential danger that people in Late Antiquity were subject to at times, only because the twentieth century has seen even worse.

the case with Caesar's 'Germani'; the name may have indicated a smaller group somewhere near the Rhine, but its territorial definition was obviously Caesar's invention. Roman federate troops on the Rhine (for instance in the Civilis rebellion) are the only 'Germani' for whom there is evidence that they ever considered themselves as Germani; otherwise no strong identity seems to have corresponded to the name, and it virtually disappeared in the course of the fourth and fifth centuries, apart from antiquarian survivals.¹⁷ Recently, Florin Curta has suggested a similar interpretation of early Slavic identity, a very attractive hypothesis which however will have to be debated in more detail on the basis of his new book.¹⁸ Again, we are dealing with a very broad population designated with a rather general name. In this case, however, the name stuck, and Slavs actually adopted the name for themselves. The name Goths, or rather 'Gothic peoples', also served for ethnographic classification in the fifth to sixth centuries; Gepids, Rugians, Alans, Vandals, and others were, or were not, counted among them by different authors.¹⁹ However, in spite of this ethnographic confusion, the evidence, scrappy as it is, seems to indicate that for many Goths, the ethnic name served as self-designation.²⁰

In spite of the massive criticism assembled here against this very point, I still think that Wolfram's explanation for the wide-spread use of the name has a lot to recommend it. At least as far as their name was concerned, the distant past did impinge on the Goths or Lombards. In these two cases we also have further material that claims to originate in a distant past: Jordanes for the Goths; and the Lombard origin story attested, in different versions, in the *Origo gentis Langobardorum*, in Fredegar, in Paul the Deacon, and in the *Historia Langobardorum Codicis Gothani* (plus several further *Historiae*). These cases are quite exceptional, it is true, but not unique. There is no doubt that the claim of these texts to ancient origins for these peoples is strongly ideological and cannot be taken at face value. Walter Goffart, moreover, has insisted that these texts are purely literary.²¹ This is an open debate, and after a good dose of post-modernism the tide is still in favour of seeing early medieval historiography as essentially fictional. Most contributors of this volume obviously share this point of view. The call for caution against taking historiographic texts at face value, and overrating their value as sources for a distant past, has been very valuable; but I do not think that a purely literary reading of early medieval historiography is adequate either.

¹⁷ For a detailed survey of the debate, see Pohl, *Germanen*.

¹⁸ Curta, *Making of the Slavs*.

¹⁹ Walter Pohl, 'I Goti d'Italia e le tradizioni delle steppe', in *Teoderico il Grande e i Goti d'Italia, Atti del XIII Congresso internazionale di studi sull'Alto Medioevo 1992* (Spoleto, 1993), pp. 227–51.

²⁰ See, for instance, the prosopographic material in Amory, *People and Identity*, pp. 348–485. He underlines the lack of strong statements of Gothic identity. In many of the sources he uses, however, it went without saying that these were Goths.

²¹ Goffart, *Narrators of Barbarian History*.

Most authors did not simply seek to entertain and edify, they also had an axe to grind. And they had a public to take into account.

This is an area in which research in many fields has made considerable progress in recent years: memory and oblivion, the shaping of the past, texts of identity.²² Anthony D. Smith has recently argued for an 'ethnosymbolic' approach to the problems of ethnicity and the nation. 'The past,' he argues, 'has the power to shape present concerns by setting the cultural parameters and traditions for our present understandings, needs and interests. [...] Ethnosymbolism regards the central components of ethnic and national phenomena as both sociocultural and symbolic, rather than demographic or political. [...] These elements consist in memories, myths, values, and traditions and in the institutionalized practices that derive from them.'²³ All of this does not seem to have impressed some of the authors of this volume very much.

For a long time, the origin stories of the Goths and Lombards were used as sources for the history of events, and the wanderings they related were charted on maps. To my mind, looking for the *Anthaib*, *Bainaib*, and *Burgundaib* of the Lombard *Origo gentis* has little heuristic value. But anybody who wants to discard these texts as sixth- or seventh-century fictions (at first glance, a reasonable hypothesis) has to account for several peculiarities. First, there are a number of clearly non-Roman names in them which cannot simply be explained as on-the-spot inventions by Jordanes's Gothic butler, or similar. Wodan and Frea point to Germanic religion, Gaut (the Amal ancestor) more specifically to Scandinavia. And what do we make of the Gothic witches, the *haliurunnae*,²⁴ or the demigods, the *ansis*? And the place-names like *Oium*, *Gepedoios*, *Golaida*: are they all inventions by Latin authors? Certainly Höfler and Hauck based much too elaborate interpretations on each of these and several other cases. But none of these names are to be found anywhere in classical ethnography; they represent (in Wolfram's terminology) pre-ethnographic material that has to be accounted for.

The second observation is the construction of the origin story in Jordanes (which I would assume to be largely based on Cassiodorus, but that is not a necessary prerequisite for this argument). The grandiose Scythian, Getic, and Dacian past that was blended into the literary mould of the *Getica* on the basis of Justinus, Orosius, and other works offers quite a smooth and well-constructed, if totally fictitious, origin story of the Goths. As the Scythian kingdom was considered the oldest in the world, it would have sufficed to give the Goths the kind of noble past that Cassiodorus had King Athalaric boast of in the Senate.²⁵ The Scandinavian origin story does not fit in, comes in

²² Patrick Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, 1994).

²³ Anthony D. Smith, *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Hanover, NH, 2000), pp. 62 and 66. See also John Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill, 1982).

²⁴ Jordanes, *Getica*, 121.

²⁵ Cassiodorus, *Variae*, trans. by S. J. B. Barnish, TTH, 12 (Liverpool, 1992), ix, 24.

disorderly little bits and pieces, and subverts the orderly narrative based on the written sources.²⁶ It contains material and names not attested in any other written text. Both Cassiodorus (in the Athalaric speech) and Jordanes refer to oral tradition.²⁷ Paul the Deacon is a similar case; he recounts the Longbeard story, insisting twice that these were ridiculous fables.²⁸ Walter Goffart has led an insistent campaign against all sorts of oral traditions and pagan lore; but to assume that Latin historiography was written by twentieth-century-style novelists who knew how to fit in all the etymologically correct names in foreign languages to make their stories plausible does not suffice to explain away the evidence there is. A more likely explanation for this unpleasant irruption of archaic-style material would be that both Cassiodorus (or Jordanes) and Paul, who did not value this kind of lore very highly, still took it on board; not because it made a good story (it ruined a good story, in the case of the *Getica*), but because part of the public expected it.

This is, in fact, the problem with these fragments: they do not make a good story; they ruin it, and continue doing so in modern scholarship. They rarely represent an unequivocal tradition but try to reconcile some options and exclude others (Jordanes argues against a British origin story of the Goths at one point²⁹). There were all sorts of stories around, some of them also derogatory, and the tensions in our sources seem to be traces of a constant renegotiation of identity. In the case of the written version of the *Origo gentis Langobardorum*, it can be argued that Theodelinda and Gundeperga, two queens from the 'Bavarian dynasty', had a specific interest in it, and that it was far from being equally significant to everybody.³⁰

The 'pre-ethnographic' fragments can not be reasonably dated (with the exception of the *haliurunnæ* story, which must be post-375); their explanation is dubious; their effect on Gothic identity may have varied. But they are there. The idea that texts and memories contributed in some way to the shaping of identities is a common assumption in contemporary medieval studies.³¹ If gods, heroes, and genealogies figure in them, it

²⁶ Jordanes, *Getica*, 25–28, 79–81, 94–101, 121–22.

²⁷ Jordanes, *Getica*, 28: 'in priscis eorum carminibus pene storico ritu in commune recolitur'; *Getica*, 79: 'ut ipsi suis in fabulis referunt.'

²⁸ Paul the Deacon, *Hist. Lang.*, I 7–9.

²⁹ Jordanes, *Getica*, 38; he concludes with a direct comment on alternative views about the origin of the Goths in Constantinople, which he refutes: 'nos enim potius lectioni credimus quam fabulis anilibus credimus.' See also the forthcoming book by Andrew Merrills about geographic digressions in early medieval historiography.

³⁰ Walter Pohl, 'History in Fragments: Montecassino's Politics of Memory', *Early Medieval Europe*, 10 (2001), forthcoming; idem, 'Memory, Identity and Power'; idem, 'Paolo Diacono e la costruzione dell'identità longobarda', in *Paolo Diacono: uno scrittore fra tradizione longobarda e rinnovamento carolingio*, ed. by Paolo Chiesa (Udine, 2000), pp. 413–26.

³¹ James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (Oxford, 1992); Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*; Elisabeth van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900–1200*

is all the more likely that these stories meant something to somebody. Myths and histories could motivate, and could be used to motivate; they were open to different appropriations, and a diversity of Gothic groups (and their leaders) could lay claims to a specific blend that might also include any amount of classical ethnography and biblical history. On the whole, they accounted for what was in a name: the 'social energy', as Stephen Greenblatt has called it.³² For the diffusion of these stories, it is not necessary to assume a solid *Traditionskern*; appropriation of the *ridiculae fabulae* that were around and their diffusion both played their part. Certainly, the Carolingians reinvented their own Germanic past, and their literary tastes are responsible for much of what we know about it.³³ Yet they hardly did so out of the blue, with nothing to start with, but relied on stories that people told.

Thus, chances are that the Goths were not, as Walter Goffart argues so brilliantly, happily forgetful of their dark and pagan past. In the light of cultural anthropology, this would be unlikely. It is true that historical memories fade into oblivion after about three generations; but before that, beyond the so-called 'floating gap', and even across considerable stretches of time, most peoples remember origins, perhaps not as they really happened, but not in an entirely malleable form either.³⁴ Most theories of ethnicity assume that such a 'mythomoteur' (as A. D. Smith called it) played a central role in the construction of ethnic identity.³⁵ European scholars visiting Cambridge, Massachusetts, are often surprised at the enthusiasm with which many of its inhabitants can indicate the exact spot on the pavement where some memorable deed of liberation happened, and tell the story in detail. Similar things happen in most countries in the world. I was told as a child how coffee first came to Vienna when the vizir's tent was plundered after the Turkish siege of 1689 had failed — the origin myth of the Vienna coffee house.

In interpreting origin myths, Höfler and his successors made a fundamental methodological mistake: they distinguished sharply between 'authentic myth' (such as the Scandinavian origins of Goths and Lombards) and insignificant scholarly inventions

(London, 1999); eadem, ed., *Medieval Memories: Men, Women and the Past, 700–1300* (Harlow, 2001).

³² Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley, 1988).

³³ Roberta Frank, 'Germanic Legend in Old English Literature', in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. by Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 88–106; eadem, *The Search for the Anglo-Saxon Oral Poet* (Manchester, 1993) = *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, 75 (1993), 11–36; Matthew Innes, 'Teutons or Trojans? The Carolingians and the Germanic Past', in *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 227–49.

³⁴ Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 2nd edn (Munich, 1997), p. 48 (using a concept by Jan Vansina).

³⁵ Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 57–68.

(like the Trojan origin of the Franks, or the Macedonian origin of the Saxons).³⁶ In an odd way, some contributions in this volume seem to repeat this mistake, with the opposite aim of belittling the 'authentic' stories. Nevertheless, the function of all these stories is similar. In a sense, all traditions are invented traditions,³⁷ even though the Gothic battle against the Vandals or the Boston Tea Party may actually have happened. Nor are fictitious origin stories necessarily more orderly and clear-cut than Jordanes's compromise version of the Gothic origin legend. As Alexander Murray has ably demonstrated in the case of the Franks, Gregory and Fredegar had to come to terms with rather contradictory evidence. Troy and the Quinotaur, Turks and Phrygians, Pannonia and the Rhine can hardly be the well-calculated elements of a literary master plot. They seem to represent the bits and pieces which came together in a complicated process of ethnic assimilation. The Trojan origin had the best of it and acquired wide currency, similar to the Gambara story of the Lombards. The long-term success of these stories can be measured by literary borrowings and manuscript circulation. The *Chronicon Salernitanum*, written c. 974, relates an episode in which a Lombard nobleman called Rampho contradicts his prince who suggests paying tribute to invading Franks: 'It is better to die fighting than to live here unhappy. Have you never read, my lord, how our forefathers left their homeland because of the tributes that the Vandals required from them?'³⁸ Such ethnic Ramboism may be fictive, but it must have seemed a likely thing to happen. For the period of the establishment of the *regna*, the evidence is scarce and rather inconclusive. But it is hard to imagine that barbarian warriors of the time were so distracted that they forgot their gods and their (putative) forefathers altogether.

The *Traditionskern*, the nucleus of tradition, is not a very adequate model for the way such traditions were remembered. 'The image of a kernel implies a misleading sense of solidity and immutability. Rather, it was a loose set of groups and networks more or less involved in "ethnic practices."' ³⁹ The story of the Amal dynasty was at least as disrupted as that of the Goths on the whole and cannot be traced back beyond Theoderic's father in any reasonable way.⁴⁰ I would rather assume that all sorts of origin stories about the Goths were known to all sorts of people. The art of making people feel

³⁶ Summed up in Otto Höfler, 'Abstammungstraditionen', in *RGA* I (1973), pp. 18–29.

³⁷ *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by Eric Hobsbawm and Terry Ranger (Cambridge, 1983). See also Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1991).

³⁸ *Chronicon Salernitanum: A Critical Edition with Studies on Literary and Historical Sources and on Language*, ed. by Ulla Westerbergh, *Studia Latina Stockholmiensia* 3 (Stockholm, 1956), p. 39. It should be noted that the story (set in the early ninth century) refers to written transmission. Cf. Walter Pohl, *Werkstätte der Erinnerung: Montecassino und die Gestaltung der langobardischen Vergangenheit*, *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, Ergänzungsband* 39 (Vienna, 2001), p. 170.

³⁹ Pohl, 'Telling the Difference', p. 67.

⁴⁰ Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, pp. 250–55; Heather, *Goths*, pp. 113–17.

part of an ethnic group consisted in convincing them all that this was in fact their people, and (if there was one) their king, *rex noster*, because they shared some common past, however vaguely defined. Thus, the Roman myth of origin from Troy came to include the Gauls, and could finally become a Frankish origin story. To assume that all of these traditions were the work of a few intellectuals in their ivory tower (as Höfler did, too), and had no bearing on actual identities, is as elitist as Wenskus's *Traditionskern* model, and projects the concerns of modern academics into a distant past.

Ethnic traditions were far from clear-cut; they were open texts that had to accommodate different narratives, although they could not be manipulated at pleasure. There was a tension between codification and modification. What has been preserved in writing is in many cases the version in which a dynamic textual history became frozen in time. It is no accident that (as Walter Goffart observes) both Jordanes and Paul the Deacon wrote their histories when the respective kingdoms had collapsed. The kingdoms of the Goths, Lombards, or Franks had to accommodate a dynamic balance of different ethnic groups. This also explains the relative scarcity of the ethnic titles in the early period of the *regna* that Andrew Gillett has observed. His contribution gives a very valuable overview and advocates some shifts in focus from Wolfram's seminal *Intitulatio* I⁴¹ (his list could be supplemented, for instance with the documents preserved on Visigothic slates that have the title *rex* without specification,⁴² or with Anglo-Saxon law-codes and charters, both of which include examples such as *rex Cantuarorium*,⁴³ but the relative proportions will remain). Odoacer led a multi-ethnic army of Pannonian federates and was perhaps deliberately opaque about his own ethnic background, so that both contemporary and modern authors disagreed about whether he was German or Hun, Thuringian or Herul, or whether he belonged to the Sciri (as is most likely) or the enigmatic Turcilingi.⁴⁴ *Theodericus rex* did not rule only his Goths, but the whole of Italy. The 'absolute title', as Wolfram observed, could be understood in a more general sense, whereas the ethnic specification could imply a limitation to his rule.

Still, on some occasions ethnic discourse was used to reassure those who shared this identity. In that respect, the prologue to Rothari's *Edict* and the longer prologue of the *Lex Salica* are extraordinarily strong statements. Rothari dates the promulgation of the

⁴¹ Wolfram, *Intitulatio*.

⁴² Isabel Velázquez Soriano, *Las pizarras visigodas: Edición crítica y estudio*, Antigüedad y cristianismo, 6 (Murcia, 1989) (newly re-edited as Isabel Velázquez Soriano, *Documentos de época visigoda escritos en pizarra (siglos VI–VIII)*, 2 vols (Turnhout, 2000)), e.g. nos 41, 43.

⁴³ Anton Scharer, *Die angelsächsische Königsurkunde im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert*, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 26 (Vienna, 1985), p. 64; *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, ed. by Frederick L. Attenborough (Cambridge, 1922), pp. 18, 24.

⁴⁴ R. Reynolds and R. S. Lopez, 'Edica: German or Hun?' *American Historical Review*, 52 (1946), 36–53; Walter Pohl, 'Edika', in *RGA VI* (1986), pp. 446–47; Herwig Wolfram, *Das Reich und die Germanen: Zwischen Antike und Mittelalter*, Siedler Deutsche Geschichte, 1 (Berlin, 1990), pp. 264–65.

law-code by Alboin's entry in Italy, states that its aim is to facilitate defence against enemies, and then, *propter futuris temporis memoriam*, gives a king-list of seventeen generations running parallel to that of the *Origo gentis Langobardorum*, plus his own genealogy over ten generations. This is supplemented with divine providence and borrowings from the rhetoric of the *Codex Theodosianus*. The epilogue (Rothari 386) abounds with references to the orally transmitted laws of 'our fathers' and the needs of *gens nostra*.⁴⁵

This prologue was addressed to a specific audience of Lombard noblemen at the court of Pavia. Similar documents were transmitted only rarely. The promulgation of the laws of Alaric II in 506 had a much more mixed audience of Gothic and Gallo-Roman aristocrats; the king needed to stress that he ruled both, not only the Goths. It took a long time for ethnic rhetoric to really catch on; its apex among the Lombards was reached in ninth- and tenth-century Benevento when inscriptions, poetry, and prologues to the law abound in glorification of the *gens (Lango-)Bardorum*. By that time, Lombard identity had spread to include most of the romance-speaking population, whereas the Lombards had lost most of their distinctive lifestyle, and had to rely on rhetoric to assert their ancient prestige. Two out of three preserved copies of the *Leges Langobardorum* that include the *Origo gentis Langobardorum* were copied in southern Italy shortly after 1000.⁴⁶

To reiterate, because this point that I have repeatedly made has been consistently ignored in all the critiques fired at ethnogenesis theory in this volume: I regard it as plausible that pre-ethnographic, non-Roman traditions played some part in the creation of identity of the new peoples that dominated in the post-Roman kingdoms, but this assumption is not at all essential to the understanding of ethnic processes. Whether invented or only partly invented, such traditions could play an analogous role: the world in which the barbarians had settled on Roman soil presented high risks, challenges, and problems of adaptation; narratives could give a meaning to this difficult situation.⁴⁷ Perhaps the efforts of ethnic groups in the USA to preserve or recreate their separate identities while meeting the challenge of the society around, much studied in recent sociology, may provide a point of comparison.⁴⁸ At certain points, we have evidence that kings, and their advisers, used and manipulated ethnic discourse to support their power: the speech written by Cassiodorus for King Athalaric in the Senate or King Rothari's prologue are such examples (directed at rather different audiences). But royal agency certainly was not the only way in which ethnic identities could spread; it is simply the most obvious. To put it in terms of a dichotomy that is often obscured in recent debates:

⁴⁵ Pohl, 'Memory, Identity, and Power'.

⁴⁶ Pohl, *Werkstätte der Erinnerung*, pp. 108–51.

⁴⁷ Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore, 1987).

⁴⁸ Cf. *Ethnic Los Angeles*, ed. by Roger Waldinger and Mehdi Bozorgmehr (New York, 1996); *Theories of Ethnicity: A Classical Reader*, ed. by Werner Sollors (New York, 1996).

ethnic ideology, as a conscious effort to promote certain ideas, made use of ethnic discourse, the largely unreflected way in which people spoke about ethnicity on the basis of certain implicit assumptions. An important and puzzling case without royal agency is that of the early Slavs. I have suggested that their emergence represents most of all the spread of a way of life that, unlike the post-Roman kingdoms in the West, did not rely on Roman infrastructure.⁴⁹

Of course, we have little evidence of how strong ethnic identities actually were; it is likely that this differed a great deal across space and time. But what they can help to explain is the relatively greater coherence of ethnic groups as compared to 'normal' armies or retinues. When the Roman *comes* Bonifatius died, he told his followers to join his arch-rival Aetius, and his wife to marry him.⁵⁰ Likewise, when Stilicho or Aetius were killed, their armies dissolved. When Alaric or Athaulf died, their Goths elected another king.⁵¹ I am far from assuming that '*gentiles Bewußtsein*' was all that motivated them. But being a *gens* must have made a difference, and given them some sense of belonging. Recent exploits surely were a good part of this shared identity. But Aetius's troops had also been through the battle of 451 against Attila, and other victories, together. Whether Alaric's and Theoderic's armies were told stories about voyages across the sea in three boats, battles against the Vandals, and Gothic witches, we can only guess. We do know that Americans nowadays hear about the Mayflower, the Alamo, and Pocahontas, and that to many, these stories matter. In any case, military exploits alone were not a sufficient basis for building a kingdom, and neither was personal loyalty to a warlord.

The barbarians came with neither clear-cut myths nor clear-cut identities. Modern research has tried to establish clear categories and has obscured the amount of paradox and ambiguity in the sources, even as far as names are concerned. The term Anglo-Saxons, for instance, was coined by continental authors around 800 and only slowly received in England; before that, identities were labelled by reference to kingdoms (Kent, Wessex, Mercia) and putative continental origin (Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Frisians), whereas Angles, Saxons, but also *Garmani* were used for the whole.⁵² Most peoples consisted, as Andrew Gillett remarks, of sub-groups that most probably were more relevant for individuals, but are not always well attested: Gothic Tervingi and Greutungi; Alamannic Brisigavi, Lentienses, and others; or Vandalic Silingi and Hasdingi. Other groups that were drawn into the orbit of a dominating group more or

⁴⁹ Pohl, *Die Awaren*; idem, 'Slavs', in *Late Antiquity: A Guide*, pp. 608–09. Florin Curta's model in his *Making of the Slavs* is different, but not incompatible with my views.

⁵⁰ Marcellinus *comes*, *Chronicon*, ed. by Theodor Mommsen, MGH AA XI, 78.

⁵¹ Zosimus V 34.2, V 35.6 (Stilicho); Jordanes, *Getica*, 158–64 (Alaric, Athaulf). Cf. Kulikowski in this volume, p. 81.

⁵² Walter Pohl, 'Ethnic Names and Identities in the British Isles: A Comparative Perspective', in *The Anglo-Saxons From the Migration Period to the Eighth Century: An Ethnographical Perspective*, ed. by John Hines, *StHistArch*, 2 (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 7–40.

less preserved their identity on a local level (such as the Gepids under Lombard and Avar rule), as regional subgroups (such as the Rugi under the Ostrogoths, actively preserving their identity through endogamy and political organization),⁵³ or even as a second nation specified in the royal title (such as the Alans in the Vandal kingdom). New regional subgroups could emerge, such as the *Sermesiano*i under Avar rule⁵⁴ or the Provençals in the Frankish kingdom. Ethnic processes were (and are) complex, long-term developments; one of the disadvantages of the term *ethnogenesis* is that it suggests an origin of the *ethnos* in a limited initial stage. The ethnic formation of a group could fail, and the group disappear, as happened with so many migration-age peoples: Rugians, Gepids, Heruls, and finally Goths also. Success and failure are simply descriptive terms; the careful reconstruction of ethnic processes, their political context, and their perception in the sources is the main methodological approach proposed by the Vienna school. The analysis of origin legends and ethnic discourse is just one of the tools in what is necessarily a bricolage, trying to use the entire tool-box of late antique and early medieval studies.

Studying ethnicity in the period also has to be an interdisciplinary venture. There is, however, a methodological problem in the use of both philological and archaeological methods.⁵⁵ The latter is discussed in the contributions by Sebastian Brather and Hubert Fehr, representing a renewed debate in German archaeology that is spear-headed by Heiko Steuer's Freiburg school.⁵⁶ As a historian, I can only contribute some general considerations briefly to be sketched here. As Brather (pp. 158–59 above) rightly remarks, archaeological cultures are an abstraction based on the selection of arbitrary features from a continuum of differences. As a methodological principle, this archaeological culture has to be established independently from phenomena reconstructed from other sources: the speakers of a language (also an abstraction incorporating a certain set of dialects and idiolects on the basis of distinctive features), a political community (for instance, the *regnum Francorum*), and, finally, most elusive of all, the 'people'.⁵⁷ Neighbouring cultures share many cultural traits, and a look at distribution maps, the

⁵³ Peter Heather, 'Disappearing and Reappearing Tribes', in *Strategies of Distinction*, pp. 95–111.

⁵⁴ Pohl, *Die Awaren*, pp. 274–81.

⁵⁵ I cannot go into the methodological problem of using reconstructions of language and etymologies (touched in Walter Goffart's paper) here. In any case, language is not coextensive with ethnic identity (see Pohl, 'Telling the Difference', pp. 22–27); and most etymologies for ethnonyms are hypothetical.

⁵⁶ Other recent views: Horst Wolfgang Böhme, 'Kontinuität und Traditionen bei Wanderungsbewegungen im frühmittelalterlichen Europa vom 1. bis zum 6. Jahrhundert', *Archäologische Informationen*, 19 (1996), 89–103; Falko Daim, 'Archaeology, Ethnicity and the Structures of Identification: The Example of the Avars, Carantanians and Moravians in the Eighth Century', in *Strategies of Distinction*, pp. 71–93.

⁵⁷ I have argued this at greater length in Pohl, *Germanen*, pp. 8–10.

main basis for ethnic ascriptions, shows that even object types classed as ethnically relevant are rarely found only within the 'ethnic' settlement area proposed on their basis. Even statistical methods and a broad range of objects do not solve the problem, as in the analysis of Alamanni and Franks by Frank Siegmund, mentioned by Brather.⁵⁸ Siegmund proposes an ethnic identification of the Franks on the basis of axes (the '*francisca*'⁵⁹) and glass vessels in graves, but even his figures show only moderately significant statistical differences.

Do archaeological cultures therefore have no relationship with ethnic groups at all? In many cases, this may be correct. But in other cases, I would not be as pessimistic as Brather. If, in the later sixth century, a certain type of cemetery ends in Pannonia around the time when a similar archaeological culture begins in Italy, and we know from written sources that the Lombards migrated to Italy in 568, are we allowed to connect the two phenomena?⁶⁰ Such cases always present the methodological difficulty of inferring the dating of the material in question too easily from the written source and thus may end up in a vicious circle; and indeed, recent excavations have yielded a considerable amount of 'Lombard-style' objects in post-568 Pannonian graves.⁶¹ But on the whole, dating early medieval objects has become quite sophisticated on the basis of purely archaeological methods, so there is a methodological corrective, and it seems admissible to connect the respective cemeteries with the Lombards. However (and this is another of Brather's observations, pp. 164–67 above), this can never be proof to identify any individual as a Lombard, Avar, or member of any other definite ethnic group. Many of the objects in graves may have been signs of ethnic identity, but we have no direct access to their symbolic value; written sources offer hardly any clues, as I have argued at length.⁶² In certain cases, an archaeological culture can be linked with an ethnic group,

⁵⁸ Frank Siegmund, *Alemannen und Franken* (Berlin, 2000); for his theoretical basis, see pp. 55–73. See Brather, pp. 153–57 above.

⁵⁹ For a sceptical view of the so-called *francisca* as a sign of Frankish identity: Pohl, 'Telling the Difference', pp. 33–37.

⁶⁰ Volker Bierbrauer, 'Die Landnahme der Langobarden in Italien aus archäologischer Sicht', in *Ausgewählte Probleme europäischer Landnahmen des Früh- und Hochmittelalters: Methodische Grundlagendiskussion im Grenzbereich zwischen Archäologie und Geschichte*, ed. by Michael Müller-Wille and Reinhard Schneider, *Vorträge und Forschungen*, 41.1 (Sigmaringen, 1993), pp. 103–72.

⁶¹ For instance, in the newly excavated cemetery of Zamárdi: see, most recently, *L'oro degli Avari: Un popolo delle steppe in Europa* (Milan, 2000). Avar archaeological culture — archaeologists have excavated about 50,000 graves from between the late sixth century and c. 800 in the Carpathian basin — is another case in point in which an archaeological culture corresponds quite well with what we know about a people; see *Awarenstudien*, ed. by Falko Daim, *Archaeologia Austriaca Monographien*, 1 (Vienna, 1992).

⁶² Pohl, 'Telling the Difference'.

but this is a precarious relationship that does not necessarily allow us to reconstruct an ethnic landscape that is any more precise than we can infer from written sources.

One reason why an identification of a single person, even with typical apparel, is problematic is that we know little about how pervasive ethnic identities actually were in the period. When and to whom did ethnicity matter? This takes us back to a question implied in Andrew Gillett's paper. How important was ethnic discourse? The Roman and barbarian armies of the migration period surely felt more related to each other than to the civil population: 'their concerns and outlook were far from being purely ethnic.'⁶³ When, in the course of the Gothic war, a besieged city was taken, the defeated soldiers of the enemy were usually integrated into the victorious army 'on equal terms', (ἐπὶ τῇ ἴσῃ καὶ ὁμοίᾳ); the civil population was often sold off into slavery or even massacred.⁶⁴ But still, these soldiers preserved their ethnic identity, and Procopius, an eye-witness of Justinian's wars, could identify them and knew much about their background and history.⁶⁵ Possibly, the need for ethnic identification grew in environments that were ethnically heterogeneous, like the Roman army or the core areas of the empire. But just as nowadays, according to Abner Cohen, ethnic groups within the US represent 'new social forms', not a 'survival from the age of mass migration',⁶⁶ new ethnic identities on Roman territory were not simply imported from the woods of Germania. They were 'new social forms' of identification in a complex environment. The very concept of the *gens* was not, as Wenskus had argued, a purely Germanic idea, but relied at least as much on biblical history and classical ethnography. Understood in this form, ethnicity was bound to last in western European culture, and was much later exported to other cultures.⁶⁷ But this was a gradual process, and we need not expect to find strong manifestations of ethnicity at every turn in our record.

Likewise, we should not discard as literary fictions whatever expressions of ethnic identity we find. If there is a common approach in the otherwise rather heterogeneous contributions in this volume, it is a call for caution in using the sources. 'The sources

⁶³ Pohl, 'Telling the Difference', p. 67.

⁶⁴ Walter Pohl, 'The Empire and the Lombards: Treaties and Negotiations in the Sixth Century', in *Kingdoms of the Empire*, pp. 75–134.

⁶⁵ In most cases, his interest in the history of Vandals, Goths, Heruls, and others begins with their crossing into Roman territory. Except for a few cases (i.e. the Huns), there are no origin stories. This may be an argument against regarding distant origins as the key to ethnic identities, but also indicates that outside observers such as Procopius were not interested in origin stories.

⁶⁶ Abner Cohen, *Urban Ethnicity*, Association of Social Anthropologists of the Commonwealth Monographs, 12 (London, 1974), p. xv. Cf. also *Ethnic Identity: Creation, Conflict and Accommodation*, ed. by Lola Romanucci-Ross and George DeVos, 3rd edn (Walnut Creek, CA, 1995); *Social Identity Processes: Trends in Theory and Research*, ed. by Dora Capozza and Rupert Brown (London, 2000).

⁶⁷ Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe*, (Princeton, 2001), esp. pp. 157–74 on Zulu ethnogenesis.

are not a distorting mirror between us and the barbarian past. They are an opaque barrier,' as Kulikowski (p. 82 above) puts it. I would suggest that they are in some ways both. But additionally, they are also part of the very phenomenon we are trying to come to terms with. Ethnicity is not somewhere out there in the dark, while our sources display little interest in explaining it to us. Ethnic identities in a world as complex as Late Antiquity only existed through efforts to make them meaningful. Face-to-face groups, local and regional communities could share a sense of belonging without much effort; they only needed to distinguish between 'us' and 'them'. Goths or Franks lived in a world where this was not enough. They were *gentes* among many others, distributed over wide areas; to give them a sense of community required more sophisticated forms of communication. This is an idea that I have repeatedly proposed, and it is not simply functionalist or instrumentalist. It takes the social construction of reality into account but is not wholly constructivist either.⁶⁸

The contributions in this volume regard Latin sources, especially narrative ones, as ultimately inconsequential for barbarian identities: an opaque barrier. But this assumption rests on a firm dichotomy between Romans and barbarians being upheld even into the sixth century. We can be fairly certain that the Alamanni on the right bank of the Rhine or the Huns in the Pontic steppes took little note of what Ammianus wrote about them. But things changed. Take the example of Athaulf (a notable absence from Kulikowski's otherwise, on the whole, convincingly sober reconstruction of Gothic migration). Orosius (*Hist.*, VII 43) recounts how he heard a noble citizen from Narbonne speak in Jerome's house in Bethlehem, where he claimed he had been most familiar with Athaulf at Narbonne. This man told the famous story how Athaulf first wanted to turn *Romania* into *Gothia* but by experience had been convinced that the Goths should become defenders of the Roman empire. One may debate whether this account can serve as a distorted mirror or as an opaque barrier to what Athaulf 'really' said. But the story gives first-hand access to a debate among Romans about the role of the Goths in the empire. Jerome, Orosius (behind him, Augustine and Varro), a *vir inluster* from Narbonne: these were not distant observers of realities far removed from their sphere of influence. We may infer some relationship between the publication of Orosius's *Histories* and the settlement of the Goths in 418. Communication between influential Goths and Romans was intense even before the first Gothic *regnum* on Roman soil was founded, and this communication happened in the real world. In all their scarcity, the texts transmitted to us represent traces of this communication, a key to debates, concepts, anxieties, and insecurities that increasingly involved both Romans and barbarians. Admittedly, we know less about many things that earlier generations of scholars were very certain of (and some still are). But this depends on the kinds of questions we ask.

I therefore agree with Kulikowski's call for pragmatism; we need to look at the sources as specific traces of communication, and try to 'ask in every single instance

⁶⁸ For a recent overview of the discussion, see Smith, *Nation in History*, esp. pp. 61–69.

what that ethnic identification meant in context, why ethnic comment was felt necessary' (p.84 above). However, I do not believe that this is necessarily incompatible with having theoretical tools at hand that help to ask questions more consciously. Paul Veyne has warned us that trying to 'take the evidence at its own terms' (see Kulikowski, p. 83 above) easily leads to following the use of a theoretical model all the same, without realizing it.⁶⁹ But a single theoretical model will hardly be enough. 'Ethnogenesis theory', in its traditional form as presented by Wenskus, has sharpened perceptions for some phenomena that had hitherto been ignored, but it has obscured others. More recent attempts to present a model have been more inclusive.⁷⁰ The papers in this volume do not have any coherent or even debatable alternative to offer. But hopefully, if the discussion can be salvaged from some of its initial misapprehensions and defamatory insinuations, it may (and many contributions in this book provide good starting points) lead to a more differentiated understanding of the way in which ethnic discourse came to influence medieval and modern society.

⁶⁹ Paul Veyne, *L'inventaire des differences* (Paris, 1976).

⁷⁰ See Kulikowski, p. 70 above, and his n. 5, with reference to Geary, 'Barbarians and Ethnicity and Myth of Nations'.

Ethnogenesis: The Tyranny of a Concept

CHARLES R. BOWLUS

Few academic disciplines are as bedevilled by misleading constructs as medieval studies. Even the name designating our subject as ‘the Middle Ages’ and the adjective derived from it, ‘medieval’, are pejorative, implying that the entire period *c.* AD 500–1500 was a uniformly dismal era wedged between two of the greatest epochs in the history of humanity, classical Antiquity and the Renaissance, a proposition that only a few members of our guild would willingly concede.¹

A second construct, one already firmly anchored in western languages before the study of history became a scientific profession, is ‘feudalism’, a noun practically synonymous with the ‘Middle Ages’. But ‘feudalism’ and its adjective ‘feudal’ are no better anchored in the period than ‘Middle Ages’, ‘medieval’, or, for that matter, such terms as ‘Byzantine empire’ or ‘Carolingian empire’. The word ‘feudalism’ conjures up the image of an all-encompassing and integrated political, economic, social, military, and ideological system. Nevertheless, scholars, even those who insist on using the vocabulary of feudalism, are hard pressed when they are asked to define exactly what they are talking about. Historians such as Marc Bloch, Otto Brunner, and Francois Louis Ganshof felt compelled to write at length on this subject precisely because concise definitions eluded them. Fiefs, that is feudal property, did exist during the period designated ‘medieval’, but so too did other forms of holding property. Monarchs and other powerful persons sometimes summoned their feudal hosts to go off to war, but the wealthy and powerful had other (frequently more successful) means of recruiting

¹ The following is a revision of my article: Bowlus, ‘Ethnogenesis Models’. For permission to republish substantial portions of it, I wish to thank the Centre for Austrian Studies, University of Minnesota.

military forces: mercenaries, landless adventurers, merchants, peasants, and even slaves served in medieval armies. To call these forces 'feudal', unless there are concrete source-based reasons for doing so, is to distort the complex realities of medieval warfare. Almost thirty years ago Elizabeth A. R. Brown published an important article, 'The Tyranny of a Construct: Feudalism and Historians of Medieval Europe', in which she urged the abolition of feudalism from our learned vocabulary.² Although she has gained some important allies, such as Susan Reynolds, her crusade has thus far failed. Like it or not, we can no more purge 'feudalism' from our collective vocabulary than we can 'the Middle Ages'.

Given the fact that the study of the so-called Middle Ages has been plagued by misleading concepts since its inception, one might expect that medievalists would resist the temptation to pile additional conceptual baggage onto their discipline. Since the 1960s, however, the concept of 'ethnogenesis' has come to the fore, threatening to lead medievalists into an even deeper conceptual morass.³ Like 'the Middle Ages' and 'feudalism', the noun 'ethnogenesis' can be used either to convey a rigid model, a straight jacket into which data must be forced, or it can be employed so vaguely that it is totally devoid of meaning.⁴

² *AHR*, 79 (1974), 1063–88.

³ A complete bibliography on the massive literature on this subject, which seems to be increasing exponentially, is impossible in this space. The most important works are Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*; Wolfram, *Die Goten*, 3rd edn (with the English translation of the second edition: Wolfram, *History of the Goths*). Other important works by Wolfram are *Die Geburt Mitteleuropas: Geschichte Österreichs vor seiner Entstehung* (Berlin, 1987), and most recently *Salzburg-Bayern-Österreich: Die Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum und die Quellen ihrer Zeit* (Vienna, 1995). An important contribution is Pohl, *Die Awaren*. For the development and spread of the concept of ethnogenesis among medievalists since 1995, see Pohl, 'Telling the Difference'. A recent review article discusses the literature and its critics: L. E. Scales, 'Identifying "France" and "Germany": Medieval Nation-Making in Some Recent Publications', *Bulletin of International Medieval Research*, 6 (2000), 21–66.

⁴ For examples of the use of the word without much content, see Bowlus, 'Ethnogenesis Models', p. 152, especially notes 14, 15, and 16. In the past decade I have surveyed the literature and discovered numerous examples in which the word has practically no meaning. For example, I have found this to be true in the otherwise excellent work on Ottonian Saxons by M. Becher, *Rex, Dux und Gens: Untersuchungen zur Entstehung des sächsischen Herzogtums im 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts* (Paderborn, 1996), and idem, 'Volksbildung und Herzogtum in Sachsen während des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts', *MIÖG*, 108 (2000), 67–84. Becher purports to be applying the conceptual methodology of Wenskus and Wolfram, but I find that he could have written these studies without even mentioning 'ethnogenesis'. I challenge readers to ask themselves if the terminology clarifies Becher's essential point that tenth-century Saxons differed considerably from the Saxons of the age of Charlemagne. Does 'ethnogenesis' help us to understand this conclusion?

The proponents of ethnogenesis purport to be able explain how national or ethnic (take your pick) communities arose in the early Middle Ages. Many of the practitioners of this theory claim to have discovered a sociological construct yielding special insights into the process of what nineteenth-century historians called 'tribal formation'. These insights are especially useful when the evidence is either ambiguous or totally absent. As Leonard E. Scales recently put it: 'The ethnogenesis model offers a cogent explanation of how "national" solidarities might have arisen, even — or particularly — where we lack the means to study in detail their actual workings.'⁵

Although a few scholars have pointed out weaknesses in the ethnogenesis model, the literature supporting this theoretical framework seems to be increasing, while critics have confined their remarks largely to book reviews and historiographical articles. The present volume is, therefore, atypical. Of the articles above, only Walter Pohl's comments will support the theoretical claims of ethnogenesis. Most of the authors here are openly critical of the model and/or its methodologies. Two seasoned scholars, Walter Goffart and Alexander Murray, offer critiques of the ideas of the founding fathers of the ethnogenesis school as it has been applied to the early Middle Ages. Two younger colleagues, Michael Kulikowski and Andrew Gillett, study the putative roles of the army and the king in ethnic formation. Three of the papers, by Sebastian Brather, Hubert Fehr, and Florin Curta, deal with archaeology. Examining the region attributed to the Alemans, Brather's contribution demonstrates just how impossible it is to make ethnic distinctions on the basis of material remains. Thus, archaeology cannot offer support to the model. 'Between the third/fourth and the seventh century,' Brather writes, 'we find no striking changes in material culture that could indicate one or more Alemannian ethnogeneses' (p. 161). The papers by Fehr and Curta show how the search for ethnic origins (Germanic and Slavic) and modern political ideologies (National Socialist and Marxist) have prejudiced the conclusions of archaeological investigations. Material remnants are not always objective witnesses to a bygone culture. Discoveries have been subordinated (consciously or unconsciously) to the preconceptions of the researcher or to those who support his work. Derek Fewster discusses how Finns invented an ethnic past to conform with the needs of a new nation in the twentieth century. The ethnogenesis did not occur in the past, but rather in the present.

Reinhard Wenskus and Herwig Wolfram are generally recognized as the most prominent exponents of the ethnogenesis model as it has been applied in late ancient and early medieval historiography. As Murray points out, however, some recent authors have tended to ignore or minimize the importance of Wenskus's work. Wenskus's magnum opus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, is a weighty tome that has not been translated into other modern languages. Throughout his book, Wenskus uses the German term *Stammesbildung* rather than the now more fashionable 'ethnogenesis', a word of classical derivation. Perhaps a more important change is the fact that recent writings have given at least lip-service to the premise that the Roman empire asserted a major

⁵ Scales, 'Identifying "France" and "Germany"', p. 30.

role in the formation of various Germanic peoples residing within or beyond the Roman imperial *limes*. In contrast, Wenskus's *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* emphasizes certain inherently Germanic characteristics that were already present in northern Europe at the onset of the Iron Age.

Wolfram, on the other hand, has fared much better than Wenskus in recent years. Although Wolfram has frequently complained that his ideas have been misinterpreted, Goffart observes that as director of the prestigious *Institute für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, Wolfram has enjoyed the considerable resources of this academic establishment in successfully promoting his version of the ethnogenesis model. He has, for example, fostered a stable of talented disciples, who have produced numerous articles and monographs within his theoretical mould; and he has sponsored international symposia which were conceived to buttress his model — though the results of these gatherings were sometimes less than satisfactory from his point of view.⁶ He has written a history of the Goths, set in the ethnogenesis framework, which has been translated into several languages and has gone through three editions, each attempting to deal with sundry points raised by his critics. He has garnered the support not only of influential German-speaking scholars but also of leading academics in other parts of Europe and North America.

In English language publications, Wolfram has found an able translator in Thomas J. Dunlap and an eloquent defender in Patrick Geary, who has written probably the most influential short summary of ethnogenesis theory in any language. Geary penned the oft-quoted statement, 'The Germanic world was perhaps the greatest and most enduring creation of the Roman political and military genius.'⁷ Despite its ambiguity, Wolfram has regarded Geary's insight as perspicacious, and it probably did much to move him away from the 'Germanist' views of Wenskus to a somewhat reluctant acknowledgment of the works of Goffart and Jean Durliat, both of whom stress the continuity of Roman administrative and fiscal norms within 'Germanic' successor states.⁸

Nevertheless, the influence of Reinhard Wenskus is by no means banished from the ethnogenesis literature. The recent and generally imprecise emphasis of this scholarship upon Rome's role notwithstanding, Wenskus's basic premises are still central to all attempts to use the ethnogenesis model to explain the formation, dissolution, and

⁶ Bowlus, 'Ethnogenesis Models', pp. 150–51. Symposia: e.g. *Die Bayern und ihre Nachbarn*, 2 vols, vol. I ed. by Herwig Wolfram and Andreas Schwanitz, vol. II ed. by Herwig Friesinger and Falko Daim, *Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Phil.-Hist. Klasse*, 180 (Vienna, 1985) (held October 1982); *Anerkennung und Integration: Zu den wirtschaftlichen Grundlagen der Völkerwanderungszeit, 400–600*, ed. by Herwig Wolfram and Andreas Schwanitz, *Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Phil.-Hist. Klasse*, 193 (Vienna, 1988) (held May 1986); *Typen der Ethnogenese* (held October 1986).

⁷ Geary, *Before France and Germany*, p. vi.

⁸ See Wolfram's comments in *Anerkennung und Integration*, p. 21.

(sometimes) re-establishment of the various *gentes* on the fringes of and even within the Roman world.

Wenskus and other members of this school emphasize that the *gentes* of the age of migrations were not communities of descent. Certainly all the authors represented in this volume would agree that the *gentes* were not 'Germans' in the current sense of that word — though Murray shows that Wenskus did not expurgate all the elements of nineteenth-century Germanic ideology.⁹ Nevertheless, Wenskus clearly believed that the entities which earlier had been called 'tribes' (*Stämme*) included peoples of diverse biological, cultural, social, and linguistic origins, who coalesced into larger confederations (*Großstämme*) bearing such now familiar names as Marcomans, Gepids, Goths, Vandals, Burgundians, Franks, Lombards, and others. Although some members of a *Großstamm* might have been native speakers of Germanic dialects, others were more comfortable with such Indo-European tongues as Alanic, Sarmatian, or Slavic, while still others may have conversed more naturally in unrelated Turkic idioms. Their material cultures included agriculture, settled husbandry, nomadism, and even hunter-gatherer-fishing lifestyles. Whatever the foundations of their economies might have been, life on the steppes and in the forests of Northern Europe was difficult; thus, barbarian societies were inherently poor and their populations low.

On the other hand, these societies produced a much larger number of warriors per capita than did their civilized and settled neighbours. With time, they discovered that by forming military confederations they could protect themselves against their richer and better organized neighbours, and even increase their collective wealth, by making well-timed plundering raids into the Roman empire. They also accepted 'gifts' and/or extracted subsidies from imperial officials who realized that it was cheaper to pay tribute to barbarians than it was to maintain ever larger frontier military establishments in a vain effort to keep them beyond the pale. In order to tap the surplus wealth of the Mediterranean, however, the peoples living on the other side of the imperial *limes* required military leadership.

Ethnogenesis theory holds that the barbarians of the *Völkerwanderung* were primarily warrior confederations consisting of bands, each with its own leadership. They were armies, not peoples, on the move. In order to coordinate and orchestrate military activities, leadership was necessary. Despite all their internal diversity, successful confederations were led by an elite military band, a 'tradition-bearing core gens' (the *Traditionsträger*), under the leadership of a king (*Heerkönig*), providing the leadership and basic structure of the *Großstamm*. This *Traditionsträger* is an essential concept for the practitioners of ethnogenesis theory. The elite established and promoted the fiction of common descent. In spite of the fact that the *Großstämme* consisted of disparate elements, a lingua franca was necessary for the transmission of military orders and for

⁹ Ethnogenesis is often presented as the only alternative to the romantic national models of the nineteenth century. One does not, however, have to accept any of the assumptions of the ethnogenesis model to come to the conclusion that the *gentes* were not communities of blood.

the propagation of integrating myths. Eventually the core transmitted its language, its myths, its conventions, elements of its material culture, and even its name to the confederation as a whole.

This attractive explanation of the dynamics of barbarian societies has, however, been disputed by two contributions to this volume which call the role of the *Traditionskern* into question. Michael Kulikowski casts considerable doubt on the assumption that it was the militarized core *gens* that was the essence of the *Großstamm*. The assumption is not a documented fact upon which a theoretical model can be constructed, but it is rather a presupposition of the ethnogenesis model which Kulikowski tests against the written testimony of a variety of sources, and finds wanting. 'In each case cited,' he writes, 'the actions of our barbarian groups can be read either as the actions of a migrating people or as those of a wandering army' (pp. 82–83). Andrew Gillett also attacks the concept of a royal leadership, a tradition-bearing core *gens*, as being the dominant force in the process of the formation of the so-called Germanic kingdoms. Using inscriptions, coins, charters, and other sources, Gillett examines the patterns of titulature of early medieval kings and finds that only a minuscule percentage of these contain ethnic markers of any kind, suggesting that barbarian leaders presented themselves as the holders of Roman offices, not as the leaders of peoples having distinct traditions. 'The western kings patently used familiar Latin terminology, assigned to them by the Roman world in which they operated.' Gillett points out that although it is well known that both Odoacer and Theoderic avoided ethnic titles, '[it] is less widely recognized [. . .] that their form of title was typical of both earlier fifth-century kings and later rulers' (pp. 118, 111).

Typically, ethnogenesis theory distinguishes between a mythic *origo gentis* ('origin of a people') and the actual process of the coming into being of peoples (in Wenskus's terminology, *das Werden der mittelalterlichen Gentes*). The alleged *origines gentium* were written down, cloaked in myth, centuries after the core *gens* had formed; frequently, the tales of origins were only committed to papyrus or parchment at a time when the *Traditionskern* was on the verge of extinction. Yet ethnogenesis theorists insist that these stories somehow represent authentic oral traditions. Problems arise even within this theoretical framework, however, because many *gentes* have left no surviving narratives; their tribal names simply appear suddenly in foreign sources. In a recent publication, Florin Curta has shown that what has been called Slavic ethnogenesis was 'less a matter of ethnogenesis and more one of invention, imagining and labeling by Byzantine authors'.¹⁰ In other words, outsiders created the Slavs, not the peoples who were designated by that label. Wolfram attempted to obfuscate the problematic lack of *origines gentis* by positing a *Faustregel* (a rule of thumb) that the origin of a people can be said to have taken place approximately one generation before the first appearance of that people in a written source. Unfortunately, he has never explained the logical basis for this fortunate proposition.

¹⁰ Curta, *Making of the Slavs*, p. 349.

Wolfram has written that the ethnogenesis process is never finished. Like Wenskus, he is not really interested in origins, but in the process of becoming. Although logically the word ethnogenesis implies the origin of an ethnicity, ethnogenesis theorists from Wenskus on have emphasized the open-endedness of the model, an evolutionary process that continues until the core *gens* disappears or loses its sense of identity. The *gentes* frequently went through 'new ethnogeneses' and even 'second' and 'third' ethnogeneses. Even tribal names were frequently changed. Nevertheless, there was continuity as long as the core *gens* remained intact and retained a sense of its identity. This elite could have its defeats and misfortunes, but it existed as long as its traditions remained vital.

Ethnogenesis models posit that tribal traditions of an *origo gentis* typically display certain common characteristics.¹¹ First, there must be a story of a primordial deed, such as the crossing of a sea or a mighty river, or a decisive victory against overwhelming odds over an imposing foe. Secondly, the *gens* must experience a change of cult or religion following closely on the heels of the primordial deed, such as Clovis and his followers accepting baptism immediately following the Franks' victory over the Alemans. Thirdly, throughout this evolutionary process there must be an ancestral enemy 'number one', whose very existence serves to hold the *Großstamm* together.

English-language students have been able to examine Wolfram's detailed exposition of the ethnogenesis model with regard to the Goths in his weighty *History of the Goths*. The springboard for Wolfram's approach, Wenskus's *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, however, is much less accessible; so too is the historiographical context within which Wolfram wrote. Between publishing the first edition of his monograph on Goths in 1979 and the third in 1990, Wolfram sponsored a series of symposia, held in the bucolic Austrian setting of Zwettl, two of which primarily concerned ethnogenesis.¹² The papers presented at these gatherings illustrate a variety of attempts (some concerted, some purely nominal) to accommodate to the ethnogenesis model the evidence for the early history of several barbarian groups other than the Goths, including the Lombards, the Burgundians, and most importantly the Bavarians. These attempts and the debates they generated are enlightening.

A good example of how the ethnogenesis model has been employed at these symposia is a short article on the Lombards by Jörg Jarnut.¹³ According to Jarnut, the Lombards, like Wolfram's Goths, were a migrating tribe (*Wanderstamm*), who, so their alleged traditions claimed, trekked from Scandinavia to the southern shores of the Baltic, thence to the Pontic steppes, and then on to the Carpathian basin before moving into Italy; there, like the Goths before them, they established a kingdom. The becoming of the Lombards was not a slow continuous process; rather, their various ethnogeneses were marked by decisive events. Perhaps we can best compare this model with Stephen Jay Gould's 'punctuated equilibrium' theory of evolution, a process in which long

¹¹ For what follows, see Bowlus, 'Ethnogenesis Models', pp. 151–52.

¹² *Die Bayern und ihre Nachbarn; Typen der Ethnogenese*.

¹³ Jörg Jarnut, 'Die langobardische Ethnogenese', in *Typen der Ethnogenese*, I, 97–102.

periods of ecological equilibrium are followed by relatively brief periods of rapid (often violent) change, which are succeeded in turn by prolonged stasis until drastic environmental events again trigger changes in dominant organisms or even extinguishes them as a species. According to Jarnut, there were five Lombard ethnogeneses (only three of which are discussed in the paper cited here). He ignored the first, 'primitive' ethnogenesis, which allegedly took place in far-off Scandinavia, and the last, highly developed one that occurred following the Lombard migration into Italy. The latter 'bore such a completely different character that it can only be very conditionally understood under this category [of ethnogenesis]'.¹⁴ One might ask, how conditionally?

Each Lombard ethnogenesis began, Jarnut claims, with a primordial deed which gave members of the core *gens* confidence and which attracted outsiders. The most important of these was their victory over the Vandals, against overwhelming odds, when they were still settled on the lower Elbe. The Lombards (then called *Winnili*) entreated Freya, Wodan's wife, to beg her husband for victory. Wodan obliged, and the result was a surprising triumph over their ancestral foe. The victors then allowed their facial hair to grow and changed their tribal name to Lombards ('*Langobardi*' = 'Long Beards'), a sure sign, we are told, that they had converted to a Wodan cult. Eventually, the Lombards developed strong traditions of war kingship, an integrating factor which guaranteed continuity and stability as they wandered through north-central Europe.

The Lombard *Großstamm* which evolved from these origins was a polyethnic confederation of warriors whose military triumphs during the sixth century, according to Jarnut, resulted from the fact that an original small *gens* managed to attract warriors from diverse peoples with a great variety of martial skills. Thus when King Alboin conquered Italy in 568, he did so with an *exercitus* that included Saxons, Gepids, Huns, Sarmatians, and provincial Romans from Pannonia and Noricum. Despite their disparate origins, the Lombards developed traditions of common descent. This relationship, however, was not really one of blood, but of tradition (*Überlieferung*). These traditions were ideologically integrating factors which were actively promoted by the core *gens*. Since for the Lombards *gens* was a synonym for *exercitus*, one became a full-fledged member of the tribe by becoming a member of the army, an *arimannus* regardless of de facto origins.

In his attempt to reconstruct early Lombard history within the framework of ethnogenesis models, Jarnut is heavily dependent upon Paul the Deacon's *Historia Langobardorum*, which was composed long after the events that it describes. Like other historians who have tried to explain the history of early Germanic peoples on the basis of ethnogenesis theory, Jarnut assumes that Paul is recounting authentic Lombard traditions. But was he? Goffart has argued that none of the authors of 'barbarian narratives' — Cassiodorus, Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, or Paul the Deacon — naively composed their histories solely on the basis of authentic traditions, but rather that each wrote within a historical context and for specific purposes.¹⁵ Paul's *Historia*

¹⁴ Jarnut, 'Die langobardische Ethnogenese', p. 102.

¹⁵ Goffart, *Narrators of Barbarian History*, pp. 329–431.

Langobardorum, in Goffart's view, was intended to be a segment of a more general history of Italy, which he planned but never finished, a work in which he sought to place the Lombards within the framework of Christian teleology. The *Historia*, then, was not simply a redaction of barbarian traditions. Paul, according to Goffart, was more interested in shaping the past than he was in recounting stereotypical folk legends. But it is precisely upon these stereotypical traditions that ethnogenesis models have been constructed. How valid are these generalized models? The question is relevant because the generalized models have been used and are still being used to explain the histories of *Stämme* who had no Cassiodorus, Jordanes, or Paul the Deacon to recount their 'authentic' traditions.

Attempts to explain the origins and development of the Burgundians and Bavarians also provide instructive examples of how modern scholars have abused ethnogenesis constructs. Like Goths and Lombards, Burgundians were a *Wanderstamm* that eventually settled well within the boundaries of the Roman Empire; thus it is assumed that their early history fits nicely into the ethnogenesis pattern. Ian Wood's contribution to the Zwettl symposia, however, cast considerable doubt on this assumption.¹⁶ Since the Burgundians had no narrator for their barbarian past (unless one insists that the *Nibelungenlied* — written c. 1200 — represents authentic traditions), their history can only be reconstructed from the testimony of others: ancient and early medieval observers who were outsiders, each of whom, Wood pointed out, had concerns that coloured what they wrote about the Burgundians. It would be possible to use ethnogenesis models to gather up fragments from various sources in order 'to construct a coherent narrative [of Burgundian history] beginning in Scandinavia or, alternatively, on the Rhine in the time of Tiberius'. One could even punctuate such a narrative with what might be seen as primordial deeds. 'The problem with this narrative approach,' Wood argued, 'is precisely the fact that it ignores the changing perspectives of the sources. [...] In many respects they [the authors of the sources] are more central to the history than are the Burgundians themselves, who are defined not by blood, but by those who wrote about them.'¹⁷ Thus Wood's observations about the Burgundians are very similar to those of Curta concerning the making of the Slavs by the Byzantines who wrote about them.

Like the Burgundians, the Bavarians had no narrator to recount their own version of their origins and evolution as a people.¹⁸ What is more, few outsiders commented upon them, and those who did mention them give us remarkably little information until

¹⁶ Wood, 'Burgundians', pp. 53–70.

¹⁷ Wood, 'Burgundians', p. 64.

¹⁸ Only at the end of the eleventh century does the anonymous *Annolied* attempt to explain the Bavarian origin by attributing it to Julius Caesar's conquest of the 'eastern' Germans (i.e. Franks, Saxons, Bavarians, and Swabians). H. Thomas, 'Julius Caesar und die Deutschen: Zu Ursprung und Gehalt eines deutschen Geschichtsbewußseins in der Zeit Gregors VII. und Heinrich IV', in *Die salier und das Reich*, ed. by S. Weinfurter (Sigmaringen, 1991), pp. 245–77.

the eighth century.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the Bavarians were central to debate on ethnogenesis models at the Zwettl symposia. One entire symposium, in 1982, was dedicated to the Bavarian question (the published proceedings occupy two volumes), and Bavaria resurfaced time and again at a later gathering in 1986.²⁰ The debates over Bavarian origins at the first of these two symposia must have been intense, for Wolfram stated in his introduction to the published proceedings of the latter gathering that one of the theories presented at the previous conference was ‘apparently thought up as an etymological beer-hall hoax [*Bierulk*]’, positing that ‘the original Bavarians were Salzburger who began their expansion from the Salzach’, presumably to assert their domination over all of the former Roman province of Rhaetia Secunda.²¹

Although Wolfram does not tell the reader (even in a footnote) the nature of this ‘hoax’, the academic credentials of its perpetrators, or the premises upon which it is based, the theory in question was something more than a *Bierulk*. It was a serious paper (expurgated from the published proceedings of the conference) by Otto Kronsteiner, entitled ‘Linguistische Bemerkung zur “Ethnogenese” der Baiern’ (‘Linguistic Remarks on the “Ethnogenesis” of the Baiern’), which was the second presentation at the 1982 symposium, following Wolfram’s ‘Historische Bemerkung zur Ethnogenese der Baiern’ (‘Historical Remarks on the Ethnogenesis of the Baiern’). In his paper, Kronsteiner summarized conclusions reached by himself and Willi Mayerthaler. They argued that the Bavarian name is a Rhaeto-Roman one, derived from the word *Pagivari* in the Rhaeto-Romanic dialect old Ladin (Latin, *Pagus Ivarus*; German, *Salzachgau*). Their hypothesis implies that Bavaria took shape under the leadership of Romanized peoples living in and around Salzburg (*Iuvavum*) inside the imperial *limes*, rather than under the military regime of some Germanic war band that stormed into the decaying *imperium Romanum* from the outside.²²

Kronsteiner’s paper was not meant to be (nor was it taken as) a jest, despite its characterization as a *Bierulk*. Wolfram rejected it because the thesis is a variation of a theory of Bavarian origins that challenges the basic assumptions of ethnogenesis models. Wolfram has called the Bavarians ‘the foundlings [*Findelkinder*] of the *Völkerwanderung*’, defending this characterization on the grounds that ‘their appearance is sudden’ and unexplained. ‘But a foundling must first be conceived, born, and then

¹⁹ For what follows, see Bowlus, ‘Ethnogenesis Models’, pp. 154–60.

²⁰ 1982 symposium: *Die Bayern und ihre Nachbarn* (published 1985); 1986 symposium: *Typen der Ethnogenese* (published 1990); the subtitle of the latter is *unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern*.

²¹ Herwig Wolfram, ‘Einleitung oder Überlegungen zur *Origo Gentis*’, in *Typen der Ethnogenese*, 1, 19.

²² I have no intention of defending or rejecting the *Pagivari* hypothesis. For Kronsteiner’s and Mayerthaler’s views: Bowlus, ‘Ethnogenesis Models’, p. 155 n. 25. Several Germanists have attacked it vigorously: *ibid.*, n. 26.

abandoned, and the question who did this constitutes the Bavarian problem.²³ In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it had been believed that the Bavarians were originally Celts (*Boii*), an alleged ancestry that justified Bavaria's alliance with Napoleon I, since, after all, he too was the leader of a Celtic nation. In the mid-nineteenth century, however, the philologist Kaspar Zeuß transformed Bavarians into Germans — Marcomans, to be precise — who lurked on the other side of the Danube until they were defeated by Attila. When the Hunnic confederation disintegrated in the late fifth century, 'liberated' Marcomans took on a new name (variously written *Baibari*, *Baio-bari*, or *Baiovarii*), derived from their homeland Bohemia, whence they migrated across the Danube. Since World War II, however, the notion of massive Germanic migrations has been discredited and the Marcoman theory with it.

Briefly summarized and grossly oversimplified, there are now two major competing theories of Bavarian origins (with numerous variations). The proponents of each theory, it must be emphasized, recognize that early Bavaria was culturally, linguistically, and biologically pluralistic. There are, however, significant differences between them. While the first theory (based on ethnogenesis models) discards depictions of Germanic hordes pouring across the Danube after Odoacer commanded the evacuation of the Roman population of Rhaetia and Noricum in AD 488, and acknowledges that both provinces retained much of their original populations, its proponents contend that the politically active and tradition-bearing core *gens* of the Bavarian ethnogenesis came from Bohemia. These 'men from Bohemia' organized the diverse peoples then living in Rhaetia Secunda into a *Großstamm*, a political confederation that was recognized and encouraged by the diplomats of Theoderic, the Gothic king in Italy, who putatively was interested in filling a power vacuum north of the Alps to screen his southern kingdom.

The second theory, most closely associated with the late Karl Bosl, holds that Bavarian origins occurred within the boundaries of the Roman Empire. Although the scholars who adhere to this view sometimes use the word *ethnogenesis*, they generally reject the applicability of this model to Bavaria. 'Wenskus simply could not fit Bavaria into his scheme,' Bosl wrote.²⁴ For members of this school, the Bavarian duchy was organized by the rulers of the nascent *regnum Francorum*, who installed a member of the Agilolfing dynasty as the Bavarian *dux*; the *dux* himself was either (according to the variation) a Frank, a Burgundian, an Alaman, a Gallo-Roman, or, most recently, a Romanized Visigoth. While this view acknowledges the presence of Germanic speakers, it emphasizes the importance of Romanized Celts in the formation of early Bavaria. 'A people [*Volk*] and a province [*Land*],' Bosl wrote, 'that in the eighth and ninth centuries still had a numerous Romanized population, including Roman estate owners, and that still evidenced so many Roman elements and influences must have had at its very

²³ Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, p. 319.

²⁴ Karl Bosl, *Die Grundlagen der modernen Gesellschaft im Mittelalter: Eine deutsche Geschichte des Mittelalters* (Stuttgart, 1972), pp. 43–44.

inception strong Roman characteristics.²⁵ It was within this general approach that Kronsteiner and Mayerthaler worked.

As a matter of fact, no decisive evidence has emerged supporting either theory. Despite Andreas Kraus's optimistic proclamation in the mid-1970s that new technologies would solve the problem of Bavarian origins 'with mathematical precision', scholars cannot even agree on a date for the first appearance of the Bavarians.²⁶ Some insist that they must have been mentioned in Cassiodorus's *History of the Goths* (no longer extant), while others insist that Jordanes must have added Bavarians to his version of Gothic history that may or may not have been based on Cassiodorus. If we give credit to Cassiodorus for first mentioning Bavarians (c. 520) and obey the assumptions of Wolfram's *Faustregel* (i.e. that ethnogenesis occurs one generation before the first written reference to a tribal name), the Bavarian ethnogenesis must have taken place on or before 500. If, however, Jordanes (c. 550) was the first to shed any light on the Bavarians, the *Großstamm* could not have formed before 530 (that is, if we obey the dictates of the *Faustregel*). The proponents of various theories insist that these dates are vitally important, for if a date c. 500 could be established, the Bavarian ethnogenesis must have occurred when Theoderic, at the apex of his power in Italy, was hypothetically constructing a ring of satellites on the northern slopes of the Alps to protect his kingdom from intruders (thus supporting the first, ethnogenesis-oriented model of Bavarian origins from Bohemia). If, on the other hand, Bavaria formed c. 530, (or even later, assuming the *Faustregel* has no validity), Theoderic was dead by then, and his kingdom was systematically being destroyed by Justinian's armies, while Frankish rulers were busily extending their power south of the Danube and along the northern fringes of the Alps to the borders of Pannonia. Obviously this scenario fits Bosl's hypothesis (Bavaria organized by the Franks) and its variants. This construct, however, rests ultimately upon a statement in the *Lex Baiuvariorum* that implies that the Agilolfings were installed as dukes of the Bavarians by the Frankish king. Unfortunately, it cannot be established, even approximately, when the *Lex* was set down (dates covering a period of two centuries have been suggested), and, if it could, there is no way to prove that the provision in the *Lex* linking the Agilolfings with the Frankish king was included in the original version.

The disciplines of philology and archaeology were of no help to historians in resolving the dilemma of Bavarian ethnogenesis at the Zwettl symposia. As a possible compromise, Wolfgang Hartung's hypothesis was brought up.²⁷ Using philological and

²⁵ Bosl, *Die Grundlagen der modernen Gesellschaft im Mittelalter*, p. 44.

²⁶ Andreas Kraus, 'Die Herkunft der Bayern: Zu Neuerscheinungen des letzten Jahrhunderts', in *Bayerisch-schwäbische Landesgeschichte an der Universität Augsburg 1975-1977* (Augsburg, 1978).

²⁷ Wolfgang Hartung, *Süddeutschland in der frühen Merowingerzeit: Studien zu Gesellschaft, Herrschaft, Stammesbildung bei Alamannen und Bajuwaren* (Wiesbaden, 1983), pp. 164-202.

archaeological evidence, he argued that Alemans, fleeing eastward following their defeat at the hands of Clovis in 507, became the tradition-bearing core *gens* for the Bavarian ethnogenesis. Linguistic evidence does indeed indicate that early Alamannian and Bavarian dialects must have been very similar, and topographical surveys show that Germanic speakers in Alamannia and Bavaria used the same suffixes (*-ing*, *-heim*, *-hof*) to name their settlements. Cemeteries, the famous *Reihengräber*, yield evidence that inhabitants of both regions had virtually the same material culture.

At the 1982 Zwettl conference, however, Friedrich Lotter made much of exactly the same evidence to insist that the Bavarians must have been organized by Theoderic after all.²⁸ The Frankish defeat of the Alemans occurred at approximately the time when the Bavarian ethnogenesis 'should' have taken place, that is if Cassiodorus was the first to mention them and if one assumes that the *Faustregel* is correct. One also must assume that Theoderic immediately recognized that Clovis's victory opened the way for Frankish expansion south-eastward, posing a threat to Italy. Thus, the Gothic ruler, seeking to blunt this Merovingian aggression, brought in 'men from Bohemia' to organize the defeated Alemans and other heterogeneous war bands against the Franks. Bavaria became, then, a Gothic satellite guarding the approaches to Italy from the north. On the other hand, Lotter did note that it is 'remarkable' that the Bavarians were only mentioned for a second time *c.* 570, a half century after the alleged 'first mention' of them in Cassiodorus's long-lost Gothic history.

This version of Bavarian ethnogenesis did not go unchallenged at Zwettl, however, for Dieter Geuenich and Hagen Keller, in a tightly reasoned presentation, argued that the Alemans had not coalesced into a *Großstamm* themselves until after their defeat by the Franks.²⁹ The name *Alamanni* was a 'foreign designation', not an indigenous tribal one. It indicates a lack of any enduring political or military organization among the autonomous war bands operating in the region of the upper Rhine and Danube watersheds. Only after Clovis had defeated them and the Franks had organized them did these *gentes* gel as a *Großstamm* and begin to call themselves *Alamanni*. Geuenich and Keller, then, came to the conclusion that the Franks must have played the decisive role in organizing *both* the Alemans and the Bavarians.

Manfred Menke, an archaeologist, criticized historians and philologists alike for misusing evidence uncovered by members of his discipline.³⁰ He pointed out the impossibility of determining the ethnicity of individuals buried in the *Reihengräber*

²⁸ Friedrich Lotter, 'Die germanischen Stammesverbände im Umkreis des Ostalpen-Mitteldonau-Raumes nach der literarischen Überlieferung zum Zeitalter Severins', in *Die Bayern und ihre Nachbarn*, I, 29–60.

²⁹ Dieter Geuenich and Hagen Keller, 'Alamannen, Alamannien, Alamanisch im frühen Mittelalter: Möglichkeiten und Schwierigkeiten des Historikers beim Versuch der Eingrenzung', in *Die Bayern und ihre Nachbarn*, I, 71–84.

³⁰ Manfred Menke, 'Neue Ergebnisse der Archäologischen Landeskunde zur bairischen Besiedlung des alpennahen Raumes', in *Die Bayern und ihre Nachbarn*, II, 27–67.

c. 500 on either side of the Danube from Pannonia to the Rhine, and he warned against 'mixed argumentation', in which members of various related disciplines borrow data from one another willy-nilly to buttress pet theories. He cited as an example of such misuse of interdisciplinary evidence an article by Hellmut Rosenfeld, highly critical of the Kronsteiner-Mayerthal thesis.³¹ Menke agrees with Rosenfeld's linguistic conclusion that the Bavarian name must have come originally from the Germanic *Boihaemum*, not from the old Ladin *Pago Ivvari*, but he objected to Rosenfeld's equating *Boihaemum* with 'a place in Bohemia' on the grounds that the philologist uncritically used Joachim Werner's dated archaeological conclusions. Menke believes that the original *Boihaemum* was in Pannonia, and the men from there (the *Baia-wari*) must have been Germanic-speaking Goths.

Obviously the Bavarian debates at both Zwettl symposia generated heat, but little light. After the 1986 conference, Wolfram offered his revised scenario: 'Today, all participating scholars are in agreement that no *Volk* named Bavarians could have wandered into Bavaria. The political formation of a Bavarian *Stamm* occurred in the land itself.'³² Bavaria was a land formed by a mixture of peoples, including Rhaeto-Roman survivors as well as war bands that wandered up, down, and across the Danube. Some spoke Germanic, others Slavic, Iranian, Turkic, and other dialects. For Bavarians, Wolfram uses the term *colluvies gentium* (a cesspool of peoples). But a cesspool by definition is in a state of disarray. For it to evolve into a *Großstamm*, according to ethnogenesis theory, a tradition-bearing core is necessary, a *gens*, a war band with sufficient power and prestige to order the chaos, to become the nucleus around which a tribal confederation can crystallize. For Wolfram this tradition-bearing core must have come from Bohemia, not just because the name might suggest that (never mind the lack of conclusive archaeological evidence), but because the men from Bohemia could make that existential act, that primordial deed of crossing the Danube: 'The crossing of a powerful river generally counted as a "primordial deed," as the deciding event of an ethnogenesis.'³³ The men from Bohemia, he argues, did not call themselves that before they crossed the powerful stream. The name *Bai(o)varii* (or something similar) must have been originally a foreign designation, a word that the mixed peoples on the south bank of the Danube used for their neighbours north of the river. The latter must have crossed the Danube at Theoderic's bidding to organize the *colluvies gentium* in Rhaetia Secunda to defend the approaches to Italy from Frankish aggression. To assist in this Bavarian ethnogenesis, Theoderic sent Goths north, where, Wolfram claims, they established headquarters in Gauting (*Gaut-ing*, putatively a Gothic name) just southwest of Munich.³⁴

³¹ Manfred Menke, '150 Jahre Forschungsgeschichte zu den Anfängen des Baiernstammes', in *Typen der Ethnogenese*, II, 200–04.

³² Wolfram, *Die Geburt Mitteleuropas*, pp. 319–20.

³³ Wolfram, 'Einleitung oder Überlegungen', p. 31.

³⁴ Recently, Wolfram in *Salzburg-Bayern-Österreich*, pp. 22–27, has acknowledged the presence of Alemans in Bavaria at the time that the 'ethnogenesis' putatively occurred. They and

Even this scenario of Bavarian origins, however, is difficult to force into Wolfram's ethnogenesis mould. As outlined above, the necessary components of this model include a core *gens* residing outside of the boundaries of the Roman Empire which must win a great battle or, failing that, must either cross a large body of water — an ocean, an inland sea, or some powerful stream — or pass through a mountain range; the conversion of the *gens* to a new religion; and an archrival, an enemy number one, which provides the *raison d'être* for the cohesion of the diverse war bands making up the confederation. For the Bavarians, however, there is no evidence of any such evolution, not even a primordial deed. Crossing the Danube (if they did) was no major accomplishment. Between Ulm and Passau, the Danube is a stately, but modest river, not a *gewaltiger Strom*. In Passau, the confluence of the Inn with the Danube, the force of the tributary actually gives the appearance that the Danube is flowing into the Inn. In any case, archaeological evidence indicates that people crossed and recrossed it daily. In his contribution to the 1986 Zwettl conference, the archaeologist Menke pointed out that the material culture of the peoples living on both sides of the Danube *c.* 500 was identical. The Danubian watershed, he writes, was a 'broad zone of economy and movement', not a boundary.³⁵ Once the men from north of the Danube had crossed the river to bring about the fusion of this *colluvies gentium* (presumably in Bavaria), this newly formed *gens* stayed put. The Bavarian migrations ended the moment that ethnogenesis putatively took place. They were the *Fußkranke* ('the footsore') of the *Völkerwanderung*. One looks in vain to find evidence that the Bavarians suddenly changed their religion in connection with the formation of the *Großstamm*. The Rhaeto-Roman population was Christian prior to 500 and remained so. The mixed peoples who were laid to rest in *Reihengräber* are difficult to distinguish from those who reside in graves over a wide part of Europe.³⁶ Although late Roman episcopal organization broke down in this region during the sixth and seventh centuries, an ecclesiastical hierarchy was reestablished in the eighth century, after the Bavarians had been around for two hundred years. Was that a 'new' Bavarian ethnogenesis? Or it can be described better as simply the result of renewed Frankish interest in integrating Bavaria into the Carolingian polity? Finally, there is no reason to believe that the Bavarians had an ancestral enemy number one, an enduring foe whose very existence held the Bavarians together. The

the other *gentes* living there were organized by Thuringians, who migrated south through Bohemia. However, he is still convinced that the Ostrogoths, who, he insists, were the patrons of the Thuringians, engineered the Bavarian ethnogenesis from behind the scenes. He tries to make this point at p. 22, n. 50, by quoting from Gerhard Wirth, 'Anmerkungen zur Vita Severin von Noricum', *Quaderni Catanesi*, 1 (1979), 217, who suspects a Gothic participation 'im einzelnen unbekannten und kaum klar zu ermittelnden, aber unabdingbaren Organisationsmaßnahme des Ostgothenreichs'.

³⁵ Menke, '150 Jahre Forschungsgeschichte', p. 207. This idea compares very well with the ideas expounded by Brather in this volume.

³⁶ On this point, see Brather and Fehr in this volume.

Bavarian dukes, the Agilolfings, managed to maintain a relatively autonomous polity by having 'no permanent enemies and no permanent friend'. In the more than two centuries that they guided Bavaria's destinies, they were sometimes allied with the Franks, sometimes with the Lombards, and even sometimes with the Avars. Of course, they were just as frequently at war with these neighbours. None of the conditions considered necessary for the occurrence of an ethnogenesis are met in the case of the Bavarians. To paraphrase Bosl, Wenskus could not fit Bavaria into his scheme, nor can Wolfram.

The mismatch between theory and evidence for the minor tribes of the Burgundians and Bavarians is elucidating, and bears comparison with the better-evidenced cases of the Lombards and Goths. It is doubtful that the ethnogenesis construct has anything meaningful to tell about late ancient or early medieval history. It is a paradigm that may be suited for modern social scientists, who crunch massive amounts of data in their computers, who are looking for universal rules, and who are most interested in how events fit into general categories in order to illustrate common processes. It is not a methodology for scholars who probe opaque and musty manuscripts to determine the limits of our knowledge and our ignorance. The 'imagined communities' that Wenskus and Wolfram presume existed in the minds of barbarians and Romans of the age of migrations are difficult for us to grasp. Their imagined communities of the early Middle Ages probably tell us more about modern scholarship than they do about the societies existing at that time.³⁷

³⁷ R. Wiebe, 'Imagined Communities, Nationalist Experiences', *The Journal of the Historical Society*, 1 (2000), 34–35.

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